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The Light Divine



'Akhand Jyoti is not merely a magazine, It is an embodiment of my soul.' - Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

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मर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्राप्नोदयां ॥
तत्सावितुर्वरेण्यं त्यजेऽप्येष्टि एष ॥

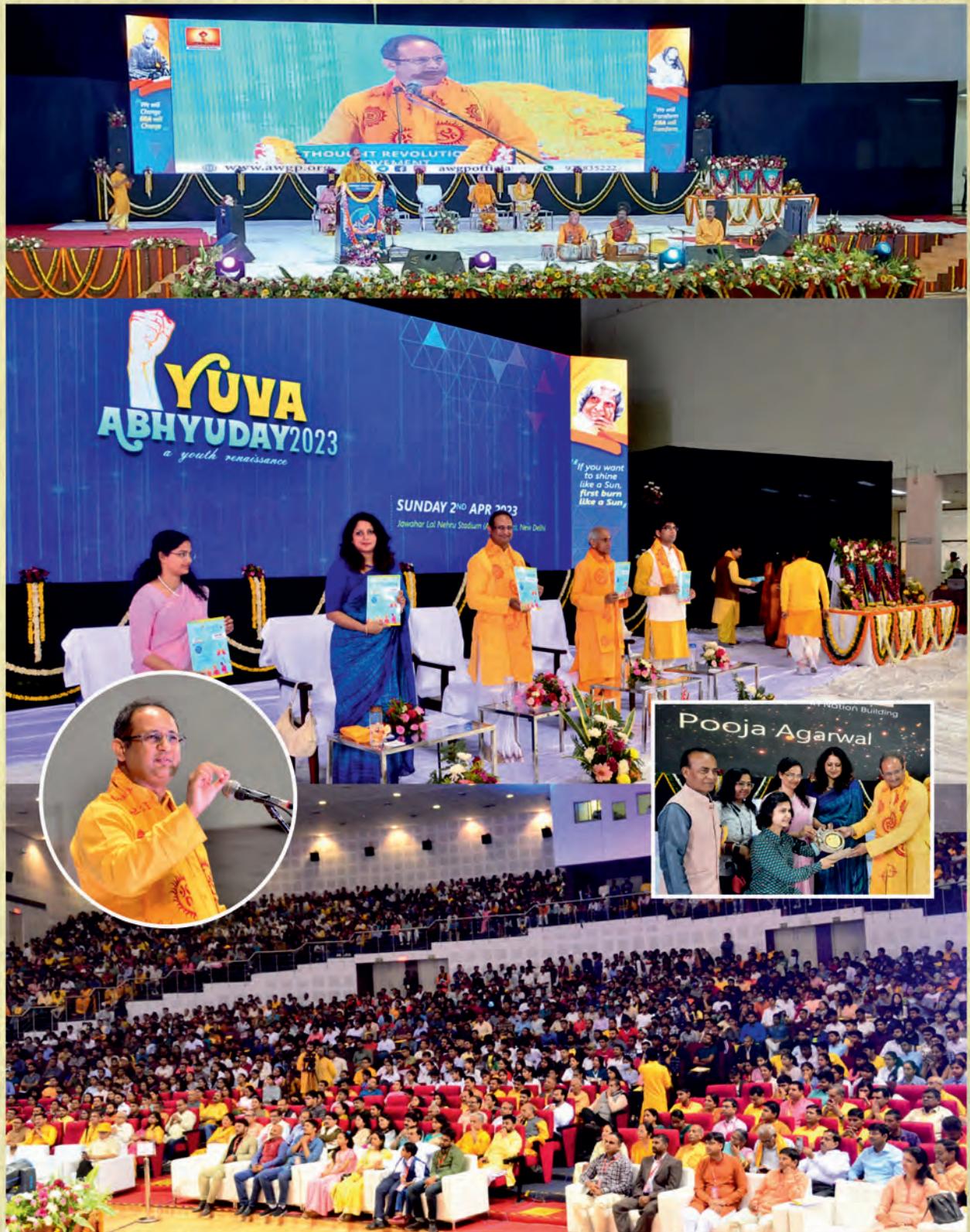


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DIYA (Divine India Youth Association) – a unit comprising the youth of All World Gayatri Pariwar, organized an event, 'Yuva Abhyuday 2023,' in New Delhi on April 2, 2023. Dr. Chinmay Pandya addressed the gathering of thousands of youth and guided them to channelize their energy in the pursuit of global welfare.

॥ Om bhūrbhuvaḥ svah tatsaviturvarenyāḥ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)

- Rigveda 3/62/10; Samveda 13/4/3, Yajurveda 3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/3



Amrit Chintan

Tapa Sadhana



A human body is a facsimile of this enormous creation, the cosmos. Scriptures say – ‘*Sarvam lokamayam puyan*,’ – that is, all the *lokas* are hidden inside this human body. That is why it has been called ‘*Dev-durlabh*’ (difficult to attain even by gods),’ and ‘*Ishvar ansh, jeev avinashi*’ (the human soul is part of the Supreme Soul; it is immortal). The super-consciousness of the Almighty is said to be present in a seed form in the human body, but it is dormant. Following the path of *Tapa-Sadhana*, this seed sprouts, grows and gives flowers and fruits. *Tapa* literally means - to heat, to give out warmth, to shine, to burn. It also means suffering, mortifying the body, and undergoing penance to burn away past karma and liberate oneself. *Sadhana* means endeavors toward disciplining the self. Therefore, *Tapa Sadhana* means —transmutation and enhancement of potentials, abilities, and conduct by self-endeavor. However, the subtle mental imprints of the previous lives in the chain of eighty-four hundred thousand *yonis* (different life forms) continue to influence one’s tendencies in human life as well. As a result, in the crude state of human life, one’s cravings, behavior, and actions are often driven by beastly instincts and negative mental tendencies. Until uprooted and thrown out, these *kusanskaras* (evil impressions on the mind) hinder personality refinement. Eliminating these untoward, negative, and pernicious instincts, habits, and desires by untiring efforts and simultaneous cultivation of ennobling character and deeds is the real *Sadhana* of human life. This *Sadhana* is no less exacting than taming and training a wild animal and engaging it in constructive activities as per our will. It is this process of *Tapa-Sadhana* that transforms a *Nara* (human being) into a *Narayana* (a Supreme Being).

- Pujya Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

Start the practice of self-control with some penance; begin with fasting. – Lord Mahavira

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A man who always speaks the truth wholeheartedly is nobler than those
who do penance and deeds of charity. – Thiruvalluvar

Understand the Philosophy of Yagya for Holistic Development



Ancient Indian culture had given unique thoughts/philosophies that transcended geographical borders. Even today, one can feel the knowledge propagated by these philosophies in every corner of the world. The concept of yagya (*yajña*) originated in India belongs to the same category.

The seers and sages of yore who gifted the philosophy/science of yagya to our culture had a vision of holistic development of society. But, unfortunately, we could not preserve the totality of that philosophy/science. As it happened with other spiritual traditions, we could save only the physical aspect of yagya - the rituals but forgot its philosophy. Therefore, there is a need to understand the latter underlying the process of yagya.

The sublime meaning of the word yagya is derived from the Sanskrit verb *yaj*, which has a three-fold meaning. The first is *Sangatikaran*, which means working together to achieve a noble aim. Worship, prayers, yoga, etc., can be done individually, but one needs a group to perform yagya. The second

meaning of *yaj* is *Devpujan* (worship of God). However, this worship is not a mere ritual; it means sitting near God and imbibing His divine or godly qualities. The word 'Dev' or 'Devata' means a person who can give, has the power to give, or whose heart is generous and empathetic. The third meaning is *Daan* - donating or sacrificing one's time, resources, and effort for a noble cause. Therefore, the essence of yagya is imbibing virtues in one's thoughts and deeds, associating oneself with the company of noble persons, and developing the quality of sacrifice.

Pujya Gurudev has quoted a story in Pragya Purana, in which Lord Brahma clarifies to Devarshi Narada why Devas (gods) and Asuras (demons) are seen differently, though both are His offspring. The story goes like this. Lord once invited both Devas and Asuras to a feast. Before serving the food, He put a condition that all the invitees would eat without bending their elbows. Asuras, being selfish, could not think of other ways of eating and hence remained hungry, whereas Devas understood the message of the Lord and shared the meals from their plates with fellow beings sitting in front of them without bending their elbows. As a result, all the Devas ate to their satisfaction and conveyed that divinity means sharing resources. Augmenting such virtues is the real objective of Devpujan.

In fact, the purpose of yagya is to transform the way of living thoroughly. The aim of yagya is also to infuse positivity in the surroundings. The fire of yagya teaches that we should generate so much heat (warmth) and energy (enthusiasm) in our personalities that whosoever comes into our contact gets infected with our positivity.

Yagya is Ayam Yajna Vishvasya Bhuvanasya Nabhih - implying Yagya is the fundamental process of manifestation of nature. - Atharva Veda (9.15.14)

The fire of yagya also emits light. Howsoever dense is the darkness, once the fire is lit, the surroundings get illuminated with light. So, fire is the symbol of going from darkness to light. It also symbolizes passing from false to truth and from ignorance to knowledge. When a person imbibes divine qualities, he emits the brilliance of those virtues.

While offering oblations in the firepit, we add '*idam na mam*' (it's not mine) at the end of the chanted mantra. Saying this, we realize that nothing is ours. Everything belongs to the Almighty. Though we are sacrificing our costly havan samagri in the fire, we don't have the ego to own it.

Let us see what Lord Shri Krishna says about yagya. He explains in the Gita (shlokas 25-30/4) – 'Invoking the Gods and offering appropriate oblations to them in the fire of yagya is called Dev-yagya. This is the most popular form of yagya. However, there are many other types of yagya. For example, offering the oblation of the soul in the fire of the Supreme Soul (i.e., uniting the Self with God), the sacrifice of senses into the fire of self-control, donating resources to the noble cause, doing penance for global welfare, the study of Vedas and other scriptures to augment one's knowledge, etc. also come in the category of yagya. However, all types of yagyas aim to achieve life's supreme goal, i.e., establish oneness with all the beings.'

Our Mission has launched a campaign called '*Gruhe-Gruhe Yagya, Gruhe-Gruhe Gayatri* (Yagya and Gayatri in every home).' The basic premise behind this movement is that when Gayatri (The Deity of righteous intellect) is worshipped, and yagya is performed in every home, that is, virtues are imbibed, and the personality is refined by the individuals and their family members, and when these refined souls utilize their time, resources, and effort for the welfare of the world generously, golden era would certainly dawn.

Let us contemplate the above lines and resolve on the coming Gayatri Jayanti (May 30, 2023) to spare more time and effort in the direction of ushering in a New Era of peace, prosperity, and harmony.

With prayer-filled wishes to our parijans and readers,


(Pranav Pandya)



When we give freely, we feel full and complete; when we withhold, we feel small, petty, impotent, and lacking. We are meant to learn this great truth that giving fulfills us while withholding and trying to get causes us to feel empty and even needier. This truth runs counter to our programming, which drives us to try to get something from others to fulfill our neediness, only to end up even more needy, grasping, lacking, and unfulfilled.

- Gina Lake

 Yagya is a process of herbal sacrifices in holy fire aimed at the finest utilization of the subtle properties of sacrificed matter with the help of the thermal energy of fire and the sound energy of the mantras. – Acharya Shriram Sharma 



A Seeker Must Be Aware of the Goal

[So far, we have been made aware that *yoga-sādhanā* is not possible without really grasping the true meaning of *yoga*. We have also been warned that in order to proceed to understand the meaning of *yoga*, one needs to scrupulously adopt the disciplines of *yoga* and surrender before the noble Guru. Many of us might wonder how a *yogi* feels and lives after completely silencing the fluctuations of the mind. The answer is highlighted in the third *yoga sutra* of part-1 (*Samadhipad*) of *Maharishi Patanjali's "Yoga Darshan."* – Editor]

The third *yoga-sutra* states —

Tadā Draṣṭu Swarūpe Avasthānam -

Yoga Darshan (3/1)

The word meaning of this *sutra* is - *Tadā* (then, i.e., after completing silencing the fluctuations of the mind), *Draṣṭu* (the seer, i.e., the *yogi*), *Swarūpe* (in the real-self), *Avasthāna* (is stilled in, i.e., exists in, lives in). That is, after silencing all the fluctuations of the mind (stilling the mental tendencies), the detached seer (*sākṣī draṣṭā*) exists in the real "self" (i.e., lives in the state of the ultimate realization of the soul). This is the state of absolute enlightenment, peace, and blissfulness, which a true *yogi* seeks for.

Maharshi Patanjali has a reach into the deepest depths of human consciousness. He thoroughly understands the nature of the human mind. He is well aware of the weaknesses and strengths, the good

and the bad qualities, and the curiosities and apprehensions of the human mind. He knows that before starting a new journey, one wants to know about the goal. In fact, one starts the journey only to reach a specific destination. The attraction of the destination enthuses and energizes the traveler and triggers him to move forward. Without any goal, one would only get strayed and wander here and there on strange paths till he is tired or lost. That is why *Maharishi Patanjali* makes the seekers (of *yoga-sādhanā*) aware of the goal.

He first outlines in the "*Samadhipad*" which is at the end of the path of *yoga*; it deals with the aim of a *yogi* and what a *yogi* would eventually achieve from *yoga-sadhana*. He describes the detailed methods of *sādhanā* only in the next part, titled "*Sadhanapad*," of his treatise — "*Yoga Darshan*." The remaining two parts successively discuss the deeper aspects.

In the third *sutra* of the "*Samadhipad*," he explains that silencing the fluctuations of the mind means complete control of the mind, end of the rule of the mind (end of the influence, interferences, and troubles caused by the mental tendencies, desires, tensions, fears, agility, moods, mental passions, impulsive instincts, etc.). The *yogi* attains the state of complete contentment, becomes the ruler of the enormous

The quieter you become, the more you are able to hear. - Rumi

talents and potentials indwelling in his being, he/she becomes a *siddha*, a perfect seer who can see everything. This is the state of *samadhi* (deep trance) in which an accomplished *yogi* acquires absolute knowledge and attains ultimate bliss and light by complete self-realization. This is what is referred to in the *Shastras* as “attainment of *buddhatva*” or “experience of *kaivalya*.” This is the ultimate goal of the diverse practices and paths of *sādhanā*.

Swami Vivekananda had attained this state and described the unboundedness, the completeness, the all-encompassing formless expanse, and the wholesome, blissful selflessness, experienced thereby, in a beautiful verse emanated through his heart — “*Sūrya Nahi, Jyoti Sundar Śāśāṅka Nahi, , Awāṅgmanasgocaram Vah Jāne Jo Gyātā Hei*’.

Indeed, this is the state of wisdom beyond the mind - the state of absolute realization of the true self (the impersonal self, the all-pervading consciousness force). This is the state in which the *sādhaka* becomes a true *yogi*. He becomes the unaffected, perfect seer of *karma* and life, thoughts and emotions, body, *prāṇa* (life force, vital spiritual energy), the mind, and the cosmic and sublime activities of Nature. Nothing is beyond the sight and experience of an accomplished *yogi*. The *yogi* remains unperturbed, stable, and absolutely calm in this *siddha* state.

Revered Gurudev (Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya) attained this state during his very first meeting with his divine *guru* (a *siddha yogi* from the Himalayas). Gurudev was a *siddha* of *yoga-sādhanā* of past several lives. He had endeavored rigorous *yoga-sādhanā* and scrupulously grasped the depth and light of multiple aspects of *yoga* in his earlier lives as — saintly poet Kabir, noble guru Ramdas, and Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Its revival in the present life was simply, in his own words, like — “grinding the already

ground paste, pounding the already crushed powder, making that, which was already made.”

Just a ray of his *guru*’s light of grace in the present life reactivated the attainments of accomplished *yoga* of his past lives and reawakened his *yogic* wisdom within a moment. Gurudev sometimes narrated this experience in a lighter way to his close associates/disciples — “Suppose you have learned to bicycle very well. Then if I give you a new, different type of bicycle, then you will hardly take any time to ride and move on it with ease. This is what happened to me. I already had absolute soul realization in my earlier life, so there was no difficulty in its re-awakening in this new body as well.

But how do ordinary seekers like us reach this state? In Gurudev’s words, it’s only because of the curtain of your mind that you are not able to see the soul’s reality. Once you remove this curtain, you will be able to see the ultimate reality clearly. This is what makes you a real seer. This is what the state of soul realization is. We don’t achieve it; we don’t see the light because of the ever-new dense shades or delusive flickering light of our mind. Maharshi Patanjali also says the same. He says that just silence the fluctuations

The attitude of gratitude is the highest *yoga*. - *Yogi Bhajan*

of your mind completely, you will attain a state of absolute peace, stability, and enlightenment. Most of us (the seekers) know it but can't do anything. How to remove the invisible, intangible, illusive curtain of the mind? How to control its perpetual agility?

Gurudev has guided a simple solution to this difficulty by citing his own example. He said "I had made my mind a slave of my *sadguru* (noble guru). You (a true disciple, a devout *sādhaka*) enslave your mind and surrender it to your noble Guru. If you really do so, then you will not think for yourself, will not be disturbed by thinking about your past, will not worry about the present, and will have no concern for the future. In that case, (i.e., if you have completely surrendered your mind, your self-identity, and your life), your Guru will take care of whatever is necessary and good for you. You only have to become an instrument in the hands of your *sadguru*. If you do so, the fluctuations of your mind will be silenced, the curtain of illusions and flickering of confusions (of your mind) will disappear, and you will attain the state of absolute trance with self-realization, will experience the ultimate truth which Maharshi Patanjali has described in the third *yoga-sutra*."

  **Yoga is the perfect opportunity to be curious about who you are. - Jason Crandell**

But what if you are not able to surrender your mind and your self-identity to your Guru? And this is most likely, as your mind is too clever and smart!

Be Careful of the Your Deceptive Mind:

Complete surrender of the mind to the Guru is not as easy as it appears. A devout disciple has great faith and reverence for his (her) *sadguru*, so much that he may feel that he has surrendered his life in the *sadguru*'s holy feet. But often, such impressions prove to be only emotional tides. Such feelings evaporate almost instantaneously in the testing moments.

Even in normal circumstances, a *sādhaka* (devout disciple) may not even realize when an intrinsic tendency or an impulse of his mind (in the form of an instinctive desire, apprehension, tension, doubt, excitement, gloom, sorrow, remembrance of a past incidence, distracting thought, etc.) overcomes his resolution, darkens/shadows the light of his determined intellect, sweeps away, or wanes out the voice of his conscience.

This intermediate state of apparent as well as hidden fluctuations (of the mind), till the *samadhi* is accomplished, is the most difficult to cross. Maharshi Patanjali describes the pathetic fall of a *sādhaka* in this trap as —

Vṛatti Sārūpya Mitaratra [Yoga Darshan (4/1)]

Meaning: The mind (easily) associates and unifies with its intrinsic tendencies.

Most of us (the ordinary people, as well as the *sādhakas*), who have not yet attained the state of a firm seer, experience the trapped or fluctuating state of mind in one form or the other. Interestingly, sometimes the tide of a specific impulse or fluctuation is so powerful that it drags us into the eddy currents of related feelings of aspiration, hope, doubt or

apprehension, etc., and our efforts of *sādhanā* also get focused accordingly (e.g., to fulfill an aspiration, or to get rid of doubt, etc.). The ever-new dreams, imaginations, and delusions of our minds drift us further away from the search for truth.

Maharshi Patanjali very clearly states in this *sutra* that one will continue to be affected by the ups and downs, joys and sorrows, thirst of desires, pulls of cravings, the fire of ego, jealousy, anger, impatience, etc., till he reaches the state of absolute stability and peace where he simply observes the worldly activities, the happenings with him and around him, his experiences, his own mind, etc., simply as an impartial, indifferent, detached onlooker (*sākṣī draṣṭā*). Except in this state (becoming a *sākṣī draṣṭā* of everything, every experience, forever), the human mind remains tightly interwoven with its *vrattis*².

Our thoughts, our good or bad feelings, and our perceptions/experiences in the world are all ‘shaped’ by our *vrattis*. In a way, our *vrattis* are our world. So long as a *sādhaka*’s mind is interlinked with its *vrattis*, there exists his false identity/ego, craving, malice, sorrow, tension, fear, etc., and his life remains bound by all kinds of thrallments. The moment a *sādhaka* is detached from the *vrattis*, the fluctuations of his/her mind are silenced forever, and he/she enjoys the ever-happy and enlightened state of living in the world, experiencing the world, working in the world only as a *sākṣī*

draṣṭā.

As also pointed out by Gurudev, Maharshi Patanjali’s *sutras* are precise, like authentic scientific conclusions. There is no scope for any doubt, confusion, misconception, or deviated interpretations in his statements. We (the seekers of *yoga*) should therefore follow these *sutras* thoroughly and proceed along the path of *yoga-sādhanā* to reach the beatifying blissful state of becoming a *sākṣī draṣṭā*. Nothing will remain to be acquired; nothing will remain to be followed; nothing will remain to be known thereafter.

Notes:

1. *Sākṣī Draṣṭā*: Impartial, indifferent, detached observer/witness.
2. *Vratti*: Intrinsic trait, foundational faculties, and potentials of the human mind. The nature of the mind, the mental tendencies, etc., depending upon the level of control and refinement of its *vrattis*.



The mind has a powerful way of attracting things
that are in harmony with it, good and bad.

- Idowu Koyenikan



Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and endure what cannot be cured. - BKS Iyengar



On the auspicious occasion of Buddha Purnima ➔

The Event of Enlightenment



That night when the Buddha entered into *sambodhi* (enlightenment), he renounced all efforts he had made for the past six years. He did great *tapashcharya* for six years and was engaged in arduous *yoga-sadhana*. The body became emaciated and skeletal; only bones remained. It is said that the stomach and the back became one, the skin dried, all body fluid evaporated, and only the eyes remained flickering. The Buddha said - "My eyes look like a tiny pool of water surviving at the bottom of a deep well in extreme summer. It appears as if I would die any moment."

He used to take a bath in the Niranjana River daily. That day, he felt so weak that he could not escape the water. Somehow, he anchored himself by catching hold of the hanging branch of a tree to prevent the stream from sweeping him away. Hanging by that swaying branch, he thought - "What in the world am I doing? I have made my body a skeleton. I have destroyed my physique by doing every kind of *yoga* and penance. My condition has deteriorated to the extent that I cannot even cross this small stream, and here

I am, thinking of crossing the *Bhavasagar* (ocean of life)! Suddenly illumination dawned, and lightning struck. He thought - 'What have I done? This is a process of suicide.' That day, he gave up everything. He had already renounced his home, throne, and luxuries and given up every kind of worldly attachment. That evening he abandoned all types of *yoga* and *tapa* too. He had five disciples. They, too, left him. Those days Sujata had a *mannat* (a wish that one desires to come to fruition) that she would offer *kheer* (rice pudding) at the tree, which she thought was the abode of a deity. When she reached there, she saw the Buddha sitting under it. She felt that the tree-deity had appeared in person. So she offered the *kheer* to the Buddha and considered herself privileged and lucky.

On any other day, the Buddha would not have been interested in the *kheer*, but now he was beyond all this; that day, he accepted it. That day, he had a very sound sleep. He slept without any worry or thought for the first time. Neither the world remained for him nor the *moksha* (salvation). When there was nothing to be gained, there was no worry either. Worry is generated when something is to be achieved. When there is no desire at all, there is also no worry at all. That night, there was no anxiety, no concern. There was no desire even for *moksha*.

The Buddha said to himself - "Every effort is futile. Neither is there anything to be achieved here nor is there anything to be achieved. There is absolutely nothing to aspire for. I have been running in this race meaninglessly. So now I renounce all journeys, all paths." That night, he slept without an iota

Irrigators channel waters; fletchers straighten arrows; carpenters bend wood;
the wise master themselves. – Lord Buddha

of worry. That night, he submerged himself in the flow of life. He swam with the flow like a swimmer who makes no effort to swim, abandoning himself and gliding along the river stream.

When the Buddha woke up in the morning, he found he had gone into *samadhi*. The *kheer* brought by Sujata was still lying as it was in the pot. So the Buddha picked up that pot and went to the bank of the Niranjana River.

He said - "I feel that the *samadhi* has fructified. I realize I am filled with immense light for the first time. All my sorrows are gone. I have no worries, no anxiety. Indeed, I am myself no more. I am extinguished. I strongly feel that I have now found what is worth finding."

He thought that he had found that *samadhi* which comes once in millions of years. So he said - "But I want proof of this. I want proof of its existence. I feel I have it, but what is the proof?" So to test this, he placed that pot on the river's surface and said - "If this pot does not go down and sink but begins to float and flow against the stream, I will be convinced that I have got *sambodhi* (enlightenment)."

The Buddha and the fishermen fishing there saw, with surprise, that the pot was floating on the water's surface and moving against the stream's flow. It was soon gone beyond eyesight.

This anecdote is very symbolic and carries deep meaning. That night, the Buddha had abandoned himself to flow

with the river. When he left himself completely, the river, too, in the morning reciprocated and gave proof that he could now go upwards and float upon the stream. Not only he but even the pot he put would become upwardly mobile (*urdhwagami*).

This is the fundamental basis of spirituality. If one day we delve into this world with full emotion and full dedication, giving up everything - no rivalry, no clash - only with full consciousness, we will find that while we had surrendered to go down, we had instead started going upward. Then all the pots and things we put down will also begin to travel upward in the lifestream.

This anecdote of the Buddha is very inspiring. The stream of life is natural, and we should leave ourselves to flow with it naturally. This stream of life is the stream of *karma* (action). *Karma* makes us flow. Right *karma* molds the direction of life towards the ultimate goal. The message of the great teacher Buddha is that we should move forward through the right *karma*.

**Offend in neither word nor deed. Eat with moderation. Live in your heart.
Seek the highest consciousness. Master yourself according to the law.**

— The Buddha

An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only in the mind. — Lord Buddha

Enriched with Medicinal Qualities

Flowers are unmatched gifts of nature. While on one side, with their colors and beauty, they enrich and beautify the whole environment, on the other side, their medicinal qualities invigorate the lives of human beings and other living animals. Here we present some common flowers with high medicinal value, which are not just beautiful; they also turn out to be great blessings for our health.

Marigold is a commonly available and popular flower that is often used to make garlands that add beauty during festivities. Though the marigold is primarily regarded as a decorative flower, it also has great qualities. It is antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and astringent in nature. So, it can be used for regulating blood flow, in headaches, wounds, toothache, and throat ache.

Marigold flowers help in the detoxification of the digestive system and provide protection to our body from diseases. They can be boiled with tea. Seeds of marigold, when consumed with crystallized sugar (*mishri*), act as a strength-enhancing

medicine. They are also useful in treating asthma and cough. Crushing and mixing the flower of marigold in coconut oil and massaging on the face gives relief from skin infections, boils, and pimples.

Hibiscus is another commonly found flower that blooms in multiple colors like red, pink, white, yellow, and orange. Hibiscus has iron, vitamins B and C, and many antioxidants. It is beneficial to treat diseases like leucorrhoea, cold and cough, and conditions like hair fall. It can provide relief for ailments like diarrhoea, piles, excessive bleeding, etc.

Fresh flowers of hibiscus can be crushed, and their juice can be rubbed mildly into hair while bathing. This juice acts as a good hair conditioner. Its leaves can be boiled with tea which helps in cold, cough, and low blood pressure conditions. Hair fall and early greying of hair can be controlled by applying a combination of hibiscus flowers ground into *go-mutra* (cow urine). This flower is boiled in mustard or coconut oil to create a very effective oil for *shirodhara* (an Ayurvedic treatment process) to treat diseases of the head. Chewing hibiscus flowers gives energy and freshness and is said to increase masculinity.

Rose blooms in multiple colors and, because of its special fragrance, is enriched with many medicinal qualities. Its petals have a sweet taste and mild aroma. It has tannin and vitamins A, B, C, and E. It also has several essential oils. Juice of rose petals is used for reducing body heat and headache. Rose has a cool tendency, and so is very beneficial in acidity and other stomach ailments. It has good medicinal

Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. – John F. Kennedy



value for treating several diseases of the digestive system. Rose water can soothe eye irritations, and an ointment made of rose petals can be used to treat many skin-related problems. Rose added to tea can reduce constipation. Due to their wonderful aroma, taste, and medicinal value, rose petals are commonly consumed in the form of gulkand. Due to its anti-inflammatory property, rose is extensively used in providing relief from the inflammation of joints and muscles. Rose is rich in Vitamin C and has important antioxidants that can help us maintain good overall health. Rose petals and their syrup are beneficial in heart diseases and can also help in treating stress and depression.

The flower of chrysanthemum has been a constant ingredient in Chinese therapies for flu, headache, swollen eyes, throat ache, and boils. This flower can be very beneficial in conditions like hypertension, diabetes, fever, swellings, and giddiness. Paste made from leaves of the chrysanthemum plant gives relief from headaches; chewing these leaves gives relief in case of blisters. Dry flowers are useful in treating problems related to bladder stones.

Petals of calendula flowers have been long used in the treatment of cuts, burns, and injuries. They have been used for the treatment of black spots and pimples because of their antiseptic qualities. This flower is also used to treat muscle cramps and provides relief during menstrual periods. It is bitter in taste and is useful for oral hygiene.

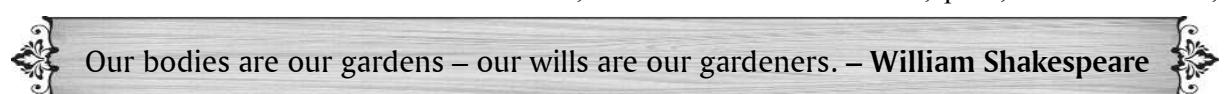
Sunflowers are beneficial flowers too. The seeds of sunflowers are rich in nutrients like magnesium, potassium, zinc, and iron, and they aid in improved functioning of the heart, digestive system, and brain. Sunflower oil prevents heart problems, obesity, and indigestion. It can help maintain moisture in the skin, and so is extensively used for massage. Sunflower seeds are rich in vitamins and minerals, and for this

reason, oil from seeds is extensively used as a cooking medium. Sunflower petals and seeds are commonly eaten directly too.

Kesar is a very beautiful and fragrant flower that grows in cold regions. It is extensively harvested in Kashmir. The filaments of this flower are used in making high-quality medicines. The filaments are very expensive and so are used in very small quantities. They are commonly used to enhance the color and taste of sweets, cold drinks, and so on. It has a warm tendency and is considered beneficial for treating stomach ailments.

Lotus is a holy flower, which is white or pink in color. It is our national flower and is regarded as a holy flower in eastern cultures. It is used in worship in Indian temples. Lotus flower is rich in vitamins A, B, and C. A tea made from this flower has significant health benefits, and its stem makes delicious curry. Due to their medicinal qualities, the flowers are beneficial in the treatment of skin diseases, acidity, diarrhoea, and bronchitis.

Likewise, the jasmine flower is a great source of antiviral compounds and is used in salads and sweets. Leaves of the jasmine plant can heal blisters in the mouth, piles, stomach worms,

Our bodies are our gardens – our wills are our gardeners. – William Shakespeare

skin itching, fungal infections etc. Jasmine tea is beneficial in treating insomnia, stress, and other diseases of the neural system. Jasmine flower has the quality to regulate breathing rate and blood pressure, and so is used in the treatment of depression. It is also helpful to treat digestive problems and reduce menstrual pain and swelling. Jasmine oil is beneficial in providing relief from body pains and cramps. It is also beneficial for the health and nutrition of hair.

The flower of night jasmine (*harsingar* or *parijat*) has many antibacterial, antiviral, and antirheumatic qualities, and so is very beneficial in treating diseases like sciatica, migraine, malaria, dengue, chikungunya. A decoction made from night jasmine

plant leaves or powder of dry leaves of the plant taken with water is very good in treating diseases of sciatica. Tea made with these flowers gives relief from migraine.

The periwinkle (*sadabahar*) flower is also known for its medicinal qualities. Experts say that this plant has more than 100 types of alkaloids which are very good for health. These flowers are very useful in treating diabetes, hypertension, and cancer. Boiling these flowers in water and drinking this water after filtering on an empty stomach in the morning can help regulate diabetes to a large extent. Eating fresh leaves of the plant by chewing can also yield the same benefit. In case of hypertension, washed and cleaned roots of this plant should be chewed and gulped early morning on an empty stomach. Paste made from its leaves benefits cancer patients and has no side effects.

All these flowers are examples of how wonderful our world is. By growing them in our homes in pots or in the fields, we can enhance the beauty of our environment, and by understanding their medicinal properties, we can also gain good health.

Engaging in some art activity daily may increase your lifespan

Research at the International Arts + Mind Lab at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine's Pedersen Brain Science Institute shows that art can lower stress, improve mood, and help regulate emotions. Feeling, seeing, and hearing through art can feed our brain and allow us to feel first before thinking, the researcher Ivy Ross at the Institute says. Even engaging in art through your eyes stimulates the brain. Stimulating the brain through new activities can help reduce the risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's. Art is anything that engages your senses. Think: dancing, sewing, crocheting, journaling, gardening, or cooking. "Eight hours of sleep is good. Science is now telling us that 20 minutes a day of some art activity is equally as good," Ross says. "You should add that to your daily routine."

- Alexa Mikhail [in Fortune Well]

Self-care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel. – Eleanor Brown

Mind: The Origin of All Accomplishments

The mind has been considered the origin of all the successes and failures. A person gets inspiration for moving ahead and rising upward from here only. Scholars have called it a cause of bondage and salvation. It is a friend as well as a foe. A controlled mind is like a nectar, and an uncontrolled mind proves to be a deadly poison. Sending a person to hell and the state of decline or making him a universal king is a game of mind.

Mind is very unsteady and sensuous. It possesses control over the entire body, including the senses. However, the soul controls the mind. The mind keeps itself busy knitting the web of setting goals and arguments for and against them. It does not sit idle. It is very powerful. Lord Sri Krishna says—*“Asaṁśayaṁ mahābāho manodurnigrahaṁ calam”*

- (The Gita – 35/6)

That is – Oh, Arjun! Undoubtedly this mind is unsteady and difficult to control. Its nature is to remain active all the time. It does not concentrate on any one object or goal. One fantasy comes to mind, and it starts planning to realize it. After some time, another one comes, and it forgets the previous one, starts afresh, knitting the web to complete the second one, and so on. But when it is taken into confidence, trained, developed, made pure, and filled with optimistic and benevolent thoughts, the same controlled mind vows to achieve perfection in life and becomes more powerful than atomic power. It can, then, guide, help, and provide boons or banes to anyone, anywhere, at any time. A refined and pure mind engaged in self-realization makes the way to salvation. The essence of the control of the mind is that it is governed

by wisdom or discretion. If the mind gets ready to imagine, plan and inspire according to whatever the intellect feels appropriate or considers beneficial for the soul, it should be assumed that the mind is under control. Fantasizing, wandering in useless memories is the task of an uncontrolled mind. When it becomes obedient, whatever task is given, it does it sincerely.

The concentration of the mind possesses an incomparable power. The controlled mind is such a powerful tool that wherever it is used, it produces miracles. For example, when the sun's rays are scattered, they give only heat and light. They cannot be used for any other purpose, but when they are focused at one point with the help of a convergent lens, the sunshine of a smaller area can produce a fire, which can even take the shape of an inferno. Similarly, when the power of the mind, which is scattered in the form of useless desires and imagination, is concentrated on one objective, the results are amazing.

A huge structure of the rituals of *Japa*, *Tapa*, and *Yoga sadhana* has

All problems are the illusions of the mind. – Eckhart Tolle



been formed so that the activities of senses converge at one point, and they start obeying the direction of the soul. While defining *yoga*, Maharshi Patanjali has said, “*yogaścittavṛitti nirodhah*,” controlling the tendencies of the mind or focusing them at one point is *yoga*. Once a person succeeds in this direction, his soul unites with the Supreme soul, and then he inherits all those *Riddhis* and *Siddhis* possessed by the Supreme soul.

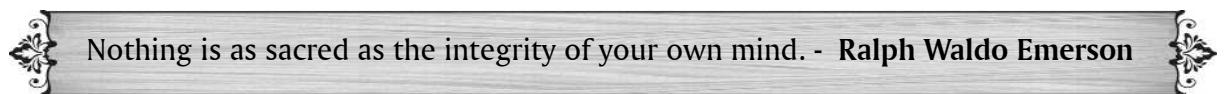
A controlled mind can be used to acquire any desired object, like brilliance, fame, knowledge, health, pleasure, material things, etc., with certainty. No power in this world can stop it. On the other side, starting from fulfilling philanthropic desires to achieving *Samadhi* (becoming one with God) can be accomplished only through a focused mind.

Our ancient sages and seers realized this power of the controlled mind. Explaining its importance in the *yagya* organized by Janak during a dialogue between *Aswalyan* and *Yagyavalka*, the latter says – “Mind alone is God: Mind is infinite.” Therefore, a person can win even paradise with that mind. In *Prashnopanishad* (2/2), the mind is also called God. In *Chhandogya Upanishad*, Sanat Kumar, while delivering a sermon to Narada, says

that the mind is the soul, the mind is *loka* (world), and the mind itself is *Brahma* (God); you worship the mind; a person worshiping it can reach at will upto a place where the mind can go. *Muktikopanishad* describes - Mind alone is the root of this world tree, loaded with thousands of leaves, branches, flowers, and fruits. This signifies desires and determination. Therefore, get rid of all the worldly desires from this psychic element so that this world tree is also dried out”. In *Taittariya Upanishad*, the mind has been called *Brahma*, and it has been said that, indeed, all creatures are produced by the mind alone; after getting born, they survive by the grace of the mind. After departing from this world, they finally enter the same mind. In the *Gita* (12/10), Lord Krishna says – “Among the senses, I am the mind.” *Veda* has called it “*Jyotisham Jyoti.*”

Thus, all the authors of scriptures, *yogis*, and *siddha* persons have evaluated the mind as the storehouse of all the powers, and they have emphasized the need to control it because it makes a rapport between the soul and the Supreme soul. *Rigvada* says – “Oh human being! If you can become capable of keeping the mind steady, you can conquer all the hurdles and calamities”.

Our ancient Indian philosophers and *yogacharyas* invented special methods of *sadhanas* to clean, purify, concentrate, make steady, and control the mind. They emphasized that the mind can be controlled with continuous practice and wisdom. While giving a discourse to Arjuna, Lord Krishna tells (The *Gita*, Chap. 6, 35th Sloka, 2nd line) – “*Abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyena ca grahyate.*” Adya Shankaracharya has explained it elaborately. Herein the essence of *Abhyasa* is to practice those *Sadhanas* of *yoga* which stop the mind from wavering. *Vairagya* means freedom from passion. Conquering greed alone is *vairagya*. According to Adya Shankaracharya, the

Nothing is as sacred as the integrity of your own mind. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

mind is directly related to the process of respiration. By controlling and regulating this process, the mind can be controlled. With the help of *Pranayama* (breath control) and *Dhyana-Sadhana* (meditation), the mind's instability, sensuality, and wild desires can be stopped and brought under the control of enlightened intelligence and soul.

Certainly, the powers of the mind are unique. A person's pleasure and pain, bondage, and salvation are all under its control. Philosopher-sages have already predicted long back, "Manah mātas devo caturvarga pradāyakam," that is, all

the powers providing *dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa* (i.e., fulfilling the familial and social responsibilities, righteous means of earning, enjoying worldly pleasures, and salvation) are hidden within the mind. If the mind can be made pure and determined, it can change the entire course of life. That is why it has been said that one who has conquered the mind has conquered the whole world.



Never say that you can't do something, or that something seems impossible, or that something can't be done, no matter how discouraging or harrowing it may be; human beings are limited only by what we allow ourselves to be limited by: our own minds. We are each the masters of our own reality; when we become self-aware of this: absolutely anything in the world is possible.

Master yourself, and become king of the world around you. Let no odds, chastisement, exile, doubt, fear, or ANY mental worry prevent you from accomplishing your dreams. Never be a victim of life; be its conqueror.

- Mike Norton

To understand the immeasurable, the mind must be extraordinarily quiet, still. – J. Krishnamurti A decorative horizontal separator featuring a central floral or leaf-like motif flanked by symmetrical scrollwork, centered around a quote.

A Disciplined Life is the Key to Success



One day *Param Pujya Gurudev* was holding a regular meeting of senior volunteers of Shantikunj. All *parijans* (volunteers) sitting nearby listened attentively to every word being said by *Gurudev*. The effect of *Gurudev*'s presence on the surroundings was spellbinding. Whoever sat near *Gurudev* spontaneously felt such a magnetic attraction toward his persona as cannot be described in words. All *parijans* present focused on and imbibed every word being spoken by *Gurudev*.

Pujya Gurudev said, "Every person desirous of entering the field of public service should first become a *sadhaka*. Without *sadhana* (self-refinement and self-discipline), personality cannot grow to the level expected in public life." Explaining this, he further said – "It is so because the consciousness of Supreme Being flows into humans only through the medium of spiritual endeavor. Therefore, *Sadhana* is the channel through which the glory of God is reflected in the personality of a human being."

It is to be noted here that these words were coming from the mouth of a person whose own life had become a symbol of *sthitapragna*, *mahayogi*, and *tapasvi*. From whatever angle we try to see his life, we will find that irrespective of all outward activities, his internal life always remained engrossed in *sadhana*.

He had set such a high benchmark of *sadhana* that he always appeared to be leading a life of full dedication to the sole objective of ushering in a new era. From the day of *Vasant Panchami* of 1926, when he had dedicated

his life to his guru, the *Mahakal*, to *Gayatri Jayanti* of 1990, he did not allow any other purpose except this sole one to become part of his life and thought.

This very inner discipline was reflected in his daily routine too. As a result, his life became a symbol of intense *shradhha* and full devotion. When a person's life pattern is imbued fully with this emotion, there remains no question of the failure of his *sadhana*. Such personalities then do not search for *siddhis*; rather, the *siddhis* become eager to come to those great souls while the latter try to keep these at bay. Hence *Gurudev* not only lived a life of *sadhana* for his whole life but also inspired others to lead such a life.

In that day's meeting, too, he was motivating the volunteers to follow this path - "Son, the foundation of *sadhana* is only one, and that is self-refinement, the constant effort to make oneself better and purer." All the people there began to think and ponder how true the words of *Gurudev* were.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. – Aristotle

The fact is that this is the very basis of *sadhana*, but mostly the attention of people does not go in that direction. Instead, they begin to see the purpose of *sadhana* in the acquisition of *siddhis*, whereas the goal of *sadhana* is progress on the path of self-refinement and self-discipline.

The words being spoken by *Gurudev* were also pointing in that direction. He said - "It is futile to think that mere completion of the rituals or process of some worship fulfills the purpose of self-refinement or self-realization. Rituals and worship are like rail signals which help in finding direction. The real journey is adopting virtues and doing noble work. These words reverberated inside every listener. In his simple way, *Gurudev* explained the complexity of *sadhana*. All present there began to think - "Yes, it is right. The very purpose of *sadhana* is the refinement of self, and how could self-refinement be possible without right *karma*?" But a person is generally not attentive towards doing good or right *karma*. Bad and impure karmas are gathered throughout life, and ironically, despite this, a person starts lamenting that he is not getting proportionate results from his so-called *sadhana*.

Param Pujya Gurudev continued - "The purpose of *sadhana* is to inspire the *sadhaka* towards right action. Remember, whatever sin has been committed in life has resulted from the accumulated effects of earlier bad deeds. *Karma* can be neutralized only through *karma*. The remedy of impious and bad deeds is possible only through pious and good deeds. Hence by penance, the *sadhaka* has to facilitate the path of self-refinement and self-progression, and in the course of doing so, he has to show the same level of courage as had been shown at the time of doing bad deeds."

Gurudev continued saying, "The life of a *sadhaka* is the life of a bold and courageous person. Whoever has to do *sadhana* has to renounce life. He who has an attachment to luxuries

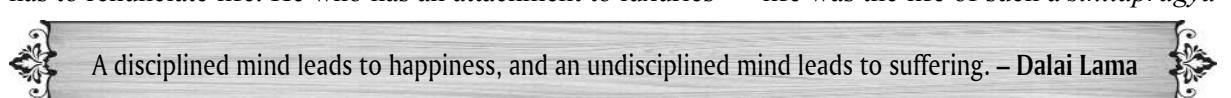
of life cannot benefit from *sadhana*." Everyone sitting there thought that the life of *Gurudev* himself was exactly like that. At the early age of 15, he also ignited the flame of *sadhana*, which continued to burn ceaselessly and uninterrupted. The winds of adversity could neither extinguish it nor make it deviate from the path.

All the listeners were thinking - "Despite having all the facilities available, we falter in the performance of *sadhana*, whereas *Pujya Gurudev* reached the peak of *sadhana* while being in the midst of difficulties and leading a life of *sadgrihastha* (good family man). Hence, he was always able to inspire everyone to follow the path of *sadhana*." Listening to *Gurudev*, the *sadhakas* recollected a sloka of the *Gita* (61/2):

*Tāni sarvāṇi samyamya yukta āśīt
matparaṇi |
Vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā
pratiṣṭhitā ||* (61/2)

Meaning: Keeping under control all the senses, the self-controlled person should meditate on me; since one whose senses have been brought under control is established in steadfast wisdom.

All were thinking that *Pujya Gurudev*'s life was the life of such a *sthitapragna*

A disciplined mind leads to happiness, and an undisciplined mind leads to suffering. – Dalai Lama

(a person of steadfast wisdom).

Pujya Gurudev concluded his lecture

“The highest stage of humanity is *sadhana*. My life has been a visible experiment of this. Every moment

of my life has been the life of rigorous ascetic discipline, and I have grown inch by inch for this very purpose. You people, too, should make self-discipline the basis of your life.” The meeting ended, and the parijans present there, contemplating these words of *Gurudev*, started dispersing.



In the sacred city of Banaras, there was a beautiful garden full of flower plants and trees of fruits of many kinds. One day a cow entered the garden and did a great deal of damage to the plants. The gardener, on finding this state of affairs, came out with bamboo and belabored the cow so much that it fell down and died. He then became greatly concerned with the consequences of his actions and wanting to get rid of the sin of cow-killing, reasoned that the sin had been committed by his hands and that the presiding deity of hands, namely the king of Gods, Indra, was responsible for the sinful act and not he. It is said that the sin learned all about the line of reasoning of the gardener and, approaching Indra, told him of the manner in which the gardener wanted to shirk his responsibility. Thereupon, Indra disguised himself as a human being and went to the garden in question. He met the gardener and began to praise the beauty of the flowers, the trees, and the layout of the garden. The gardener, thus flattered, started showing Indra the different beauty spots in the garden, whereupon Indra said, “This garden defeats even the garden of Indra. Who has made it?” The gardener said, “I alone have made this garden with my own labor.” Indra asked, “Do you mean that you have worked with your own hands?” and the proud gardener said, “With these hands of mine.” Indra then appeared in his original form and said to the gardener, “How is it that if you made the garden with your own hands, you did not kill the cow with the same hands?” The gardener was nonplussed, and it is said that the sin of cow-killing, who was nearby, at once fell on the shoulders of the gardener.

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment. – Jim Rohn

Creative Utilisation of Imagination



Imagination is such a power with which one can create one's universe and can achieve desirable success, but usually, we remain ignorant of this power and don't make good use of this natural talent. However, if we become aware of the power of imagination and use it properly, we can make life happier, successful, and blissful.

Imagination is one of the distinct powers of mental abilities through which we use imaginary figures in a certain way. Based on our experience, this helps us create something new that never existed before. Imagination is a mental process whose basis is previous experiences. Without this base of earlier experiences, imagination cannot take shape. Imagination requires a foundation. Previous experiences provide the ground for the imagination.

Hence, imagination is contemplating distant and abstract objects we weave based on resolve and pursuit. Through imagination, we visualize or mentally imagine an abstract thought or thing, establish these images in our mind, and then start making efforts in this direction. With intellect, the imagination is edited, and with a will, it is given shape. Emotions act as fuel, whereas intuitions help make quick decisions.

So imaginative power is a person's strategic power by which he constructs the majestic view of his life. Thus imagination is the best way or medium to sculpt our universe. In colloquial language, it can also be called daydreaming and can be related to any field of life. One who daydreams will climb the steps of imaginativeness and, through hard work, will attain the set goals in life.

Setting the direction of one's efforts toward achieving the

goal is the work of imagination. Imagination helps in making a blueprint of the plan. Future perspectives are integrated into the project. It is possible only by imagination to stir a person's psyche and take life in the right direction. In this way, the road to setting goals in life and remaining focused on them is paved by imagination.

With imagination, one can wander anywhere and can do anything. Real-world has boundaries but not the world of fantasy. Hence it is said that through the power of his imagination, a poet can reach where even the sun cannot go. With imaginativeness, we can enter worlds that never existed; without it, we cannot get anywhere. Someone correctly said that whatever is real and proven today must have been somebody's imagination once.

So through imagination, a person makes a strategy for his future life and brings it to practice. With vision, intellectual acuity gets sharpened, and acquiring knowledge speeds up. The abundance of imagination in contemplation and reasoning helps in solving problems. By using the power of

Imagination is the eye of the soul. - Joseph Joubert

imagination, a person can refine and improve his hobbies/interests.

In this way, imagination eradicates depression, and we get rid of our sorrows. As a result, life becomes more blissful, progressive, and beautiful. But, if the attitude is negative, then several doubts, anger, and tensions arise in the mind.

Thus imagination in its positive form is the basis of creation, whereas, in its negative form, it can make life hell. Most of the fears in life are believed to be imaginative, of which not even one-third happen or take place. Hence it is important to control negative imagination.

Considering the importance of the power of imagination in life, all possible efforts to develop it should be made. Some points are worth noting: maintain eagerness, don't let the imaginativeness die out, and always keep doing something new and widen your interests. Along with this, read vor-

ciously. New books ignite the hidden capability of imaginative powers, create new thoughts and give wings to the imagination.

Along with reading, express your thoughts by maintaining a diary. Make a new action plan every day, and to achieve it define a practical approach and execute it. Try to understand things rather than mug up. Debate them. Be prepared to tread new, unexplored paths. Have an open mind. Have a different perspective. Spend some time with creative people. Do storytelling and develop your skills.

Along with all this, keep your mind calm through meditation. A quiet and stable mind is very helpful in developing imaginative power. In fact, it is from the platform of this sound mind that the flight of imagination reaches its pinnacle.

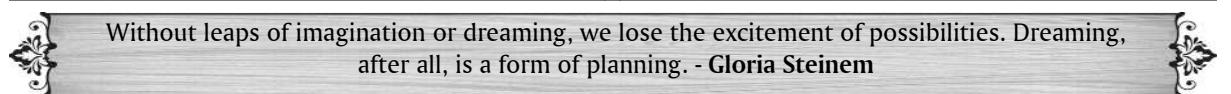
According to the great scientist Einstein, imagination is more important than knowledge - for knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world. G.B. Shaw has well said that imagination is the beginning of creation.

You wish for what you envision, and you create what you want. In essence, imagination is the eye of the soul. Through it, you see bright, golden, and expansive dreams of life, and accordingly, magnificent, divine, and grand creations take place in your life, and you move toward peace and prosperity.



Imagination is not only a uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not and, therefore, the foundation of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.

- J.K. Rowling



The Need for Healthy Entertainment



Personality development requires good education, health, communication skills, and a favorable atmosphere. But healthy entertainment is the prime source to keep all these aspects alive and vibrant. Without recreation, life becomes dull, dry, and uninteresting. Therefore, clean entertainment plays an important role in facing challenges, achieving progress, and operating optimally under stressful situations.

Our soul seeks recreation. That is why everyone likes a person who is fun-loving and who exudes humor and enthusiasm. Friends enjoy his company. This goes to show that people cherish joy more than money and wealth. Happiness is what inspires a man toward creative pursuits.

Many situations in life can be handled by strict control of the mind through tapa, vrat, fasting (upavas), etc. But when a task is accomplished with the cooperation of our mind, the outcome is also beautiful. If we befriend our mind, then even the most difficult situation can be resolved quite easily, which would have otherwise been completed after long and arduous methods of mind-control. That is why recreation is an important part of our life.

The greatest minds of the world like - Gandhi, Tagore, Tilak, Gokhale, Vinoba Bhave, Patel, Ghalib, Socrates, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, Charlie, Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, Bertrand Russel, Mark Twain, Charles Darwin, Einstein, etc. – certainly differed in aspects. But one common thing in all of them was their sense of humor and the ability to enjoy life. Humor was their constant companion, giving a breath of fresh air to their otherwise

busy and intense life. Looking at their lives, people often wonder how they battled through their challenges, remained unwavering as they upheld their ideals, and how they were able to demonstrate supreme willpower and strength. It was their light-heartedness that infused new power in all phases of their lives. Let us see what the great writers, leaders, and philosophers said about humor.

Charles Dickens said – ‘There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor.’ Gandhiji used to say – ‘If I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide.’ Rabindranath Tagore wrote - ‘When I laugh, burdens of my mind are relieved.’

Robert Frost said – ‘If we couldn’t laugh, we would all go insane.’ In the same vein, Mark Twain remarked – ‘The human race has only one really effective weapon, and that is laughter.’ Charlie Chaplin said – ‘A day without laughter is a day wasted.’ Francis Bacon advises - ‘Laughter is a sure method to increase longevity, and a smiling face is the easiest way to become popular’

Life is too important to take too seriously. If you learn to laugh at yourself, you will enjoy a lifetime of entertainment. - Gary Mack

and loved.' Stern also advocates, 'It is my opinion that every time a person smiles or laughs, he is enhancing his life.'

It is primarily poverty, illiteracy, and narrow-mindedness that prevent people from understanding the importance of recreation or looking down upon it. They gravitate towards unsavory forms of entertainment and end up wasting their energy, money, and time. The industrialization has made our lives a struggle. On the one hand, the absence of clean entertainment is depleting our inner energies, making us physically and mentally weak. On the other hand, busy life and rat race is becoming the norm. These are the primary reasons for overall unhappiness in our lives despite apparent progress, more wealth, and comforts. Hence we must devise means for healthy recreation for people.

Healthy recreation is one which not only relaxes the mind but also improves physical health and soothes our temperament. From this perspective - sports like volleyball, football, hockey, kabaddi, wrestling, cricket, swimming, and running; cultural pursuits like dancing, music, etc.; intellectual engagements like debates, antyakshari, essay writing, poetry contests - are the best forms of productive entertainment. Cleanliness, décor, and adornment are also forms of entertainment. All of them can be very beneficial and virtuous.

Among the various aspects of Indian culture, sanskaras are important from this viewpoint. The objective of sanskaras is to make the mind and soul aware of its creative potential. They are fundamentally based on the concept of healthy recreation.

Lack of cultured recreation is the reason why people are attracted to perversion. Sexual indulgence, for a long

time, is considered a pleasure, but by this option, we have not only opened the doors to physical, mental, and spiritual health depletion but also made way for character degradation and moral weaknesses. Population explosion is the result of total disregard for healthy entertainment. With this perspective, anyone can conclude that cultured recreation is essential not just for individual development but also for social and national progress.

The student and youth population today are blamed for being reckless, undisciplined, prone to bad habits like gossiping, wandering senselessly, addicted to movies, etc., leading to degradation in society. While it is true that society as a whole is suffering from the consequences of youth that has gone astray, it is also true that youth are not to be blamed for their transgressions. Instead, the parents and guardians are to be blamed for leading them to those undesirable paths. They have been devoid of healthy entertainment. Children inherently want to be happy, and when healthy ways of getting entertained were not shown to them, they found their own. If what they found was wrong, then the mistake is of the parents for not guiding their offspring on the right path.

Debates are just intelligent entertainment. - Thomas Vato

Entertainment is not just important for you, but also for your children. But they need to know about healthy psychological and social methods. Entertainment that can enlighten your inner consciousness is what is beneficial and what is the need of the hour. Creative recreation, be it in the form of verbal entertainment or sports, can lighten the burdens of the mind.

Once these healthy recreational practices are revived, social unity will be restored. Health development will find a creative direction. Aggressive attitudes will be pacified. Leadership abilities will be nurtured.

In the absence of recreation, there is no outlet or occasion for the exchange of thoughts. Immoral behavior gets encouraged. Lack of healthy entertainment is the primary

reason for the population explosion. People have somehow assumed that sexual indulgence is the main mode of recreation. If the family sizes can be contained, then there would be less burden of expenses in family maintenance. The resources can then be diverted towards healthy entertainment methods.

The right mode of entertainment is important not just for an individual but also for the society and nation at large. Therefore, we must not be indifferent to this need.

Learn Optimism from President Roosevelt

Franklin D. Roosevelt has been a historic personality. He was the President of America in the days when America was increasingly getting involved in the Second World War. Owing to his jovial lifestyle and management skills, he became the president of America for three consecutive terms ((1932-1944)).

In his last term, he suffered from a paralytic attack. People were apprehensive about his resuming normal routine. He went to Georgia, bathed in the hot springs there, and devised a new technique of swimming. Consequently, all his organs resumed functioning gradually. He was cured in a miraculous way, and his body overflowed with vigor.

Throughout his life, he worked from four o'clock in the morning to twelve 'o'clock at night. His diet was also under his control. The secret of his rejuvenation lies in his optimistic perspective toward life.

One thing is sure. Entertainment is important. Without it, the entire human race would go mad within a matter of hours. - Colin Bennett

Let Us Revive

Traditional Methods of Water Conservation



The water crisis is one of the serious problems being faced today. Many states in our country face water problems as soon as monsoons end. By the time summer sets in, the situation worsens further because we have forgotten our traditional methods of water conservation, where we focused on saving every drop. We have a two-fold water problem today. Firstly, there is not enough potable water, and secondly, the available water is rapidly changing its form, color, and taste. Nobody other than the man himself is responsible for this situation.

The irony is that if the country is more advanced and prosperous, the water crisis is much more pronounced because we have taken the path of progress at the expense of exploiting natural resources instead of conserving them along the way. Presently, the water crisis is a problem that is troubling us throughout the year, but we somehow are not ready to learn our lessons. Therefore, this is the perfect time for us to understand how precious water is and make others aware of the same, to understand the traditional methods followed by our ancestors to

save and store water. We will thus not only save water but also replenish the water in Earth.

The best way to handle the water crisis is to harvest rainwater - to store every drop of rainwater carefully. There are many instances of commendable efforts in this direction.

The first example is 63-year-old Shyamji Jadhav from Rajkot, Gujarat. He is a farmer and is not well educated, but his efforts in water preservation are nothing less than any scientific method. His organization, 'Saurashtra Loka Manch,' has used ordinary water preservations mechanisms and rejuvenated the entire Gujarat by replenishing more than three lakh wells and borewells with rainwater.

Similarly, Lakshman Singh from Lapodia village in Jaipur, Rajasthan, has used the Quadruple (Chauka) technique and created a series of 10x10 sq. ft. ponds to rejuvenate the farms. For his amazing work, in 2007, the then President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil awarded him for water conservation. Even in Alwar, Rajasthan, and Ralegaon Siddhi, Maharashtra, people have put significant efforts and designed simple schemes to conserve rainwater and transform their respective regions. They created small dams and lakes to collect rainwater from going to waste, and this water has been used for the fields making the area green and fertile.

Similarly, Hamirpur village in Datia District has harvested rainwater through these conservation methods and liberated the region's people from water woes. The villagers dug

Water is the driving force of all nature. Preserve water. – Leonardo da Vinci

a huge lake to collect rainwater. This replenished the groundwater sources so much that the village no longer depends on any other water source. Looking at the success of Hamirpur village, the neighboring villages also followed suit and gradually became self-reliant in terms of water. These successes inspired the government of Jharkhand to make rainwater harvesting mandatory for every town, including its capital Ranchi.

If we look at other countries, we can derive inspiration from Israel, which ranks at the top in collecting and storing rainwater. It sets a wonderful example in preserving water, be it groundwater, water available on the surface, polluted water, etc. It is under the government's control, while water distribution is through public and private enterprises. The situation in our country is in total contrast to this. Only 10-15% of water sources are fully or partially under government control. In contrast, all the other sources are open to public use or misuse. This results in colossal wastage of water. Statistics show that only 30% of wastewater from homes is purified, while the rest of it flows into streams and rivers. This not only wastes water but also pollutes natural resources and leads to the spread of diseases.

In countries like Singapore, companies are purifying polluted water and making 'New water,' which is used in industries, public utilities, and in township buildings. Along similar lines, purifying contaminated water can be contracted out as a business, just like the booming business of selling bottled water. The population in city slums and villages do not currently have adequate clean drinking water. They have to spend both time and money to get potable water. So, small companies can build tube wells and water supply plants to supply clean and safe water. This can be a win-win situation for small enterprises as well as for poor and needy customers. In the domain of water conservation, Japan has also taken

many successful steps. We all know that a lot of water is wasted while flushing the toilets. Depending on the shape of the flush tank, single usage results in wastage of 5-7 liters of water. Japan devised an innovative solution to this problem. A Japanese company designed a wash basin that is connected to the flush tank. Water used to wash hands directly goes into the flush tank and gets used in flushing the toilet.

America has also made some experiments concerning preserving water. For the past many years, California has been experiencing severe drought. To deal with the crisis, a company came up with an initiative for wastewater management called 'Toilet to Tap.' 100% of wastewater coming out of the houses is purified using a 3-step technique that renders the water drinkable. This enterprise is creating 37 crore liters of drinking water per day by purifying the sewage water. The purity of this water has been vetted by international standards and found to be completely safe for consumption.

Today, our country is also going through a phase of a water crisis unseen by any of the previous generations. Therefore, the need of the hour is to embark on various country-wide initiatives for water conservation and purification.

Water is the soul of the Earth. – W. H. Auden

The Search for Dedicated Volunteers – 3



Destined Events are set in Time

There is a special spot in the *Sangam* region where the sacrament of shaving the head (tonsure) and *veni-daan* takes place. *Veni-daan* is quite an elaborate ritual (with chants of specific prayers) for married women. A married woman who has volunteered for *veni-daan* with the consent of her husband first vows for this sacrament on the banks of the *Sangam* while holding the water of the confluence of the three rivers in her right hand. She applies a paste of turmeric on the entire body, as a mark of purification, then bathes in the *Sangam* (confluence of three rivers). She ties (braids) her hair into a *veni*. Then she formally takes the permission of her husband who is waiting on the banks of *Sangam*. He applies some fragrant substance on her *veni* and cuts it with the help of a knife or scissors. He keeps the *veni* separated from his wife's head in her hands. She sacrifices it in the flowing water of the *Sangam* and comes out on the banks. They both offer some prayers there. After some time she again takes a dip in the *Sangam* water. This marks the completion of her *veni-daan* sacrament.

Damayanti was insisting that her husband (Tuladhar) should allow her to do *veni-daan*, but he had his own views and was against such rituals. Acharyashri could not help laughing at their childish arguments and adamant attitudes. They had high hopes that he would resolve their dispute, so his laughter had put them a bit down. Still, they waited to listen to what he had to say. Acharyashri did not disappoint them. He really resolved the issue to the satisfaction of both! He looked at them, studied their mental state, and advised them not to hurry to decide anything for or against *veni-daan*. He asked them to wait for a month or so, as the Kumbha festival was to continue for a couple of months.

The Tuladhars did not expect this simple and instantly effective decision! They calmed down immediately. With this, the collision of their egos had ceased, and the tension on their faces was now replaced by a natural smile. Acharyashri said — “You should know that the rituals of shaving the head, tonsure, *veni-daan*, etc. at a pilgrimage site symbolize sacrificing the ego. If you are so eager and quarreling like kids on the issue of who amongst you should sacrifice the hair, then why don't you both even volunteer to cut and offer your heads?”

The couple was stunned! They realized that they are not talking to an ordinary person. He is a great ascetic devotee. “You had promised that my decision would be acceptable to both of you. So now come forward and sacrifice your lives in a special *yagya*,” — Acharyashri continued. The duo could not say anything. Their breaths were stuck for a few moments.

It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education than to have education without common sense. - Robert G. Ingersoll

Acharyashri could sense their fear. He immediately clarified what he meant: “Don’t get scared. I am asking you to sacrifice yourself for the *Naramedha Yagya*, which means that leaving aside your ego and materialistic attachments, you should devote your talents and potential for the noble cause of resurrection and protection of religion and culture”. He further guided them on how to proceed — “Your children are grown up. In another year or two, you may fulfill your responsibility towards settling them as independents and also arrange their marriages, etc. Then you come to Mathura and start a truly altruistic life after participating in the *yagya* there.”

His words inspired an unprecedented feeling of rejuvenation in the hearts and minds of Damayanti and Tuladhar. They looked at each other and found a glow of trust and confidence in each other’s eyes that they had never seen before. They bowed down in Acharyashri’s feet saying — “You are our guide; we shall do whatever you advise. We will not hesitate to even cut our heads and put them in your feet if you order us to do that. Our lives are at your disposal now”.

Several months later, the couple had disclosed before some *parijans* that in the first encounter, initially, though they did not find any visible sign of a *yogi* or hermit in Acharyashri, a hidden attraction was pulling them towards him. They felt some affection, as though he was their near relation, an elderly guide, a mentor who could help them come out of all quarrels and tensions.

Acharyashri had described the death of Damayanti and Tuladhar as more rewarding than their lives. This death, glorified as salvation or attainment of eternal peace for the couple, had occurred on the other side of Ganga in the makeshift ashram of a *sannyasi*.

It was about a year after their first meeting with Acharyashree

in Mahakumbha. A *sannyasi* named Anand Muni had organized a Chandi Mahayagya. In order to attract the pilgrims of Mahakumbha, that *sannyasi*, during that *Parva*, had made tall claims that the participants of the *yagya* would be benefitted from whatever they wished for — enormous success in business, childbirth to virgin couples, the awakening of *kundalini*, etc. This *yagya* was to be conducted in the village “Jhunsi” near the pilgrimage site of Prayag. The ancient name of this village was Pratishthanpur. The locals believe that in the Vedic times this used to be the capital of King Pururava. There is an old fort on this side of the *Sangam*. If one walks further to the North, one will find an old well called “Hansakupa”. There is an ancient temple called “Hanstirtha” near this well. It is said that this temple is built according to the (geo)-*kundalini yoga*. Anand Muni exploited this common belief and propagated that doing *yagya* at this place would endow the participants with immense energy and strength. He had fetched huge sums of money and other resources from the *yajamaans* and also asked them to do special worship rituals for nine days before the *Chandi Yagya*.

After their first meeting with Acharyashri, Tuladhar and Damayanti sincerely started working for the

People of little understanding are most apt to be angry when their sense is called into question.

- Samuel Richardson

expansion of his altruistic mission in and around their hometown and the Prayag region, which was not far from there. During one of their visits, as part of mass awareness of the Indian Culture, they had come in contact with Anand Muni. They were somehow not convinced by what he was propagating about the miraculous effects of the *yagya* he was going to organize.

They were aware that a devout *sadhaka* could attain *siddhis* through his long, arduous spiritual endeavors without necessarily participating in any such *yagya*. But how would it be possible to gain supernatural powers by merely participating in a *yagya* for 3-4 days without doing any *sadhana*? This was their main doubt against the Muni. As far as worldly gains were concerned, that way, everyone can get health benefits from the herbal processing and chanting of mantras that go on in any Vedic *Yagya*. Moreover, out of a hundred odd participants, ten or twenty may have the good fortune to get good returns from their earlier efforts in business or other professional skills; some may gain money by sheer chance, as many others would, without participating in the *yagya*.

Anand Muni could not give any satisfactory answer to their doubts. But he casually revealed that even if there

were no direct gain of *yagya*, the participation of a large number of devotees would enhance his prestige and also help him collect good sums for his ashram. Hearing this, Tuladhar lost his patience and criticized Muni for cheating people by making fake promises. He argued that one could get money and fame by doing hard work for good aims too. One need not always take shortcuts. Of all the things, why should one organize a *yagya* and attract participants under false pretext solely for petty personal gains? He thus described Muni's approach as anti-religion that would distort the tradition of *yagya* itself.

He challenged Anand Muni, saying that he opposes such *yagyas* and in order to make people aware of the real science and importance of *yagya*, he would organize a grand *Gayatri Yagya* in this very region. You can see that a larger number of people will participate in this *yagya* aimed at the welfare of all.

Salvation is Greater than Highest Honor of Life

Within a week after posing the challenge and pledging to organize a grand *Gayatri Yagya*, Tuladhar and wife sought the blessings and advice of Acharyashri on this matter. Acharyashri asked him to organize the "Gayatri Yagya" after the "Chandi Mahayagya". He told them to participate in the "Chandi Mahayagya" and provide voluntary services there. He also warned them that while they could propagate the true knowledge of *yagya* among the participants, they should refrain from criticizing or hurting the feelings of Anand Muni or his associates.

They followed the instructions of Acharyashri. While contacting people to inform and invite them to the *Gayatri Yagya* that they had planned to organize, they also gathered people's contributions and cooperation for the *yagya* organized by Anand Muni. As and when possible, they

 The most successful people are those who are good at plan B. - James Yorke 

also used to explain the meaning and purpose of *yagya* as expansion of the altruistic tendencies, goodwill, and collective efforts of people for noble aims of global welfare, etc.; cultivation of such benevolent sentiments naturally attracts divine blessings. Anand Muni did not object to these ascertainties. The efforts of the Tuladhar couple were also generating people's support for him.

The Chandi Mahayagya began as per schedule with the participation of nearly five hundred persons. Its *purnahuti* (completion) was to take place three days before Mauni Amavasya. Anand Muni had invited many saints and religious masters of the *Sangam* region and around on this occasion. Tuladhar had volunteered to distribute some invitations personally. While he was going with his wife to invite Shri Bindumadhav across the river Ganga, he found that this part near the *Sangam* was quite crowded. Suddenly two bulls appeared there; a locked horn fight was going on between them; seeing this, people started running away in panic. To save the stampede, Tuladhar took a stick from someone and started beating the bulls to separate them away; his wife Damayanti was brave, too; she also entered the spot and started beating the animals with another stick. But the violent bulls almost crushed them before running away from there. In serious condition, the couple was taken to the nearby hospital. After intensive care for two days, they were in a position to walk with some external support. In that physically disabled state, they could somehow participate in the *purnahuti* of the Chandi Mahayagya.

The Gayatri Mahayagya was to start in the same area about a week after the Chandi Mahayagya. Its *purnahuti* was scheduled to take place on the Vasant Panchami day. Tuladhar couple wanted this event to take place in the auspicious presence of Acharyashri. But it was not possible as some significant events were to take place in Mathura on Vasant

Panchami and these were scheduled much before Tuladhar's proposal of Gayatri Yagya.

In spite of their limping limbs and acute pains of injuries due to the recent accidental attack of the bulls, Tuladhar and his wife were moving around and looking after the arrangements. Because of their friendly nature and recently made contacts, many devotees had come forward to help them out. The *yagya* began as planned in a serene ambiance. Three hundred-odd devotees participated. They were impressed by the proceedings and explanations on the importance of *yagya* given on this occasion.

Anand Muni was also invited to this *yagya*. He tried to link this event with the *yagya* organized by him. But Tuladhar denied it outright and also added that — “This *yagya* is not for your purpose or my purpose. It is inspired by and could take place only because of the will and grace of the great saint-sage Acharyashri who is devoted to reviving the Vedic Culture of Gayatri and Yagya. He has called for the cooperation of dedicated awakened souls who would volunteer to devote their lives to this noble cause”.

In his short introductory speech and also in personal discussions with

 When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often, we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us. - Helen Keller 

participants he repeatedly uttered the same message. Motivated by him and impressed by the way the importance of Gayatri and Yagya was explained during this event, twelve persons came forward at the time of *purnahuti* on Vasant Panchami day. They pledged to dedicate their time and efforts for the dissemination of the knowledge of Gayatri and Yagya and the Indian Cultural values emanated thereby for the welfare of the masses under the able guidance of Acharyashri.

Tuladhar's body was severely injured hardly ten days ago. It was mainly because of his inner strength and devotion that he was still able to look after the *yagya* proceedings. The same was true of his wife, Damayanti.

After *purnahuti* of the *yagya* when most of the outsiders had gone, he sat on the makeshift stage (made for the priests of *yagya*) in the *yagyashala* and left the physical body peacefully. His associates and some participants present there were amazed to find that his wife, who was busy with some other work outside the *yagyashala*, also passed away at the same moment. Indeed, they were true soulmates.

The news of their demise reached Acharyashri in the evening, and he

caught the first train to reach Prayag. He did a *Shantiyagya* for the peace of the departed souls.

Since they had first met Acharyashri and promised him to work as per his guidance, Tuladhar and Damayanti had fully devoted themselves to the noble cause of spreading the light of Gayatri and Yagya, along with activities of social upliftment. Meeting the masses, talking to them, helping them out, addressing them to generate awareness, etc., seemed to have become a part of their daily chores. The decision on *veni-daan* that was supposed to be adjourned only for a month was so postponed that they forgot about it forever.

Later on, during their meetings with Acharyashri, the latter even joked in a lighter vein a couple of times, asking them what happened to their quarrel on *veni-daan*. They humbly uttered – we have already made the *daan* (sacrifice), not of *veni* or *hair*, but of our head itself.

Acharyashri recalled their dedication before the *Shantiyagya*. Theirs was the first and true *naramedha*. They vowed to sacrifice themselves for a noble cause and followed it with full commitment until the last breath. Destiny did not allow them to participate in the *Naramedha Yagya* scheduled to take place in Mathura. He also disclosed that both the husband and wife were great *sadhakas* for past several lives. They were liberated souls. However, in a previous life, they had, by mistake, injured some cattle of the cow family. They were born again mainly for atonement and penance to wipe out that sin by benevolent activities. The mode of atonement was chosen by their inner selves only. This is why they had to suffer the injury and bear so much pain. Now the purpose of their lives was achieved, so they left the physical body and attained salvation.

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other thing.

- Abraham Lincoln

Yagya is a God-Centered Action Performed with Every Breath



Yagyagni alone is Brahmagni

Lord Shri Krishna doesn't consider *Yagyagni* [the fire of yagya (*yajña*)] a physical fire. Instead, He says – ‘It is *Brahmagni* – a vital energy to push the *sadhaka* toward the Supreme Being.’ As a *Purohita* (priest) seated in the heart, Yagya is a divine power in which *Ahutis* (oblations) are offered. As the Vedas are written in sign language, so is the language of the Gita. In the words of the Lord, Agni may also represent the fire of self-control or that of self-surrender to God. Further, He says that the process of yagya, its fire, *havi* - an article of oblation, e.g., ghee (melted butter) or other articles, the *hota* (doer of yagya), *bhokta* (the one who is benefitted by yagya) – everything is Brahma alone. The Rishis had been propagating this knowledge through great sayings, like *So'ham*, *Sarva khilvidām Brahma*, *Sacchidānandohaṁ*, *Brahma eva puruṣah*, etc. This knowledge pertains to holistic unity. The world in which one offers the *ahutis* of one’s actions is itself, God. The energy emitted by the offering of *ahutis* is also God. The article/material of oblations is also some form of the Lord. *Hota* (the doer of yagya) is a human being; hence, the Lord is always present in his heart. The actions of a *sadhaka* – a social volunteer who has this knowledge do not become the cause of bondage. None of his actions is personal or ego-centered.

In this world run by the Supreme Being, getting one with the Lord and knowing about Him should be the aim of a human being’s actions. The one who knows the essence of this knowledge gets liberated. But, the Lord says – ‘It is possible that all the yogis or *sadhakas* may not be able to achieve this knowledge. Therefore, in the next shloka, He says –

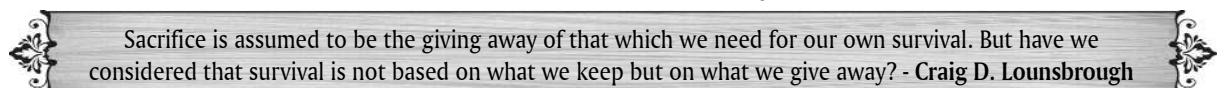
Daivamevāpare yajñāṁ yogināḥ
paryupāsate |
Brahmāgrapare yajñāṁ
yajñaivopajuhvati || (25/4)

Meaning: Some yogis following the path of yoga by actions engage in worship and offer oblations to the deities invoked in the worship, while others (who have realized the Self) offer the Self as a sacrifice by the Self in the fire of the Supreme Self alone.

Different types of yagya

In this shloka, Lord is conveying that Dev Yagyas are done to achieve specific objectives by invoking the deities like Indra, etc. Offering the sacrifice of Self in the fire of the Supreme Self is called Gyan Yagya. This process of uniting the soul with the Supreme Soul is the best kind of yagya. Here the author of the Gita has liberated the word ‘yagya’ from its traditional meaning and made it more elaborate. This fact is explained in the next six shlokas, where the Lord talks about twelve different kinds of yagyas and their significance.

Śrotrādinīndriyānyanye sāmāgniṣu
juhvati |

Sacrifice is assumed to be the giving away of that which we need for our own survival. But have we considered that survival is not based on what we keep but on what we give away? - Craig D. Lounsbrough

Śabdādīnviśayānanya indriyāgniṣu
juhvati || (26/4)

Meaning: Some yogis offer hearing and other senses as sacrificial oblations in the fire of restraint; others offer pleasing sounds and various objects of the senses as oblations in the fire of the senses.

Sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi
cāpare |
Ātmasāṁyamayogāgnau juhvati
jñādipite || (27/4)

Meaning: Others sacrifice all the functions of the senses and those of the breath (vital energy or Prana) in the fire of the yoga of self-restraint kindled by knowledge.

Dravyayajñāstapoyajñā
yogayajñāstathāpare |
Swādhyāyajñānayajñāśca yatayah
sāṁśitavrataḥ || (28/4)

Meaning: Some people offer wealth, austerity, and yoga as a sacrifice (donating their possessions as a charity), while the ascetics of self-restraint and rigid vows offer the study of scriptures and knowledge as a sacrifice.

Apāne juhvati prāṇāṁ prāṇe'pāṇāṁ
tathāpare |

Prāṇāpānagatī rudhwā prāṇāyāma parāyaṇāḥ || (29/4)

Meaning: Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath.

Apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati |
Sarve'pyete yajñavido yajñakśapitakalmaṣāḥ || (30/4)

Meaning: Others who regulate their diet offer life-breaths in life-breaths; all these are knowers of sacrifice, whose sins are all destroyed by sacrifice.

Yajñaśiṣṭāṁratabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam |
Nāyam loko'styayajñasya kuto'nyāḥ kurusattama || (31/4)

Meaning: Those who eat the remnants of yagna (sacrifice), which are like nectar, go to the eternal Brahma. This world is not for the man who does not perform yagna; how then can he go to other heavenly worlds, O Arjuna?

Let us now look at the previous six shlokas. Out of these, shlokas 26 – 30 describe the twelve types of yagyas, and shloka 31 explains the importance of performing yagna. Lord Shri Krishna has described these yagyas so that the sadhakas imbue their lives with the philosophy of yagna. All these are related to a person's internal activities as well as external relations. By infusing the philosophy of yagna in one's life, one becomes one with the Supreme Being. One can understand all the types of yagyas, as discussed by Yogeshwar Krishna, by the following list.

1. Invoking the Gods and offering appropriate oblations to them in the fire of yagna – Dev-yagna

Leading like a superhero means going that extra, grueling mile for the sake of others. It's being able to demonstrate superhuman endurance, empathy, and selflessness. - **Sebastien Richard**

2. Offering the oblation of the soul in the fire of the Supreme Soul – Homa of uniting the Self with God.
3. The sacrifice of senses into the fire of self-control
4. The renunciation of desires into the fire of senses
5. The sacrifice of all the actions of senses and that of pranas into the fire of restraint achieved through enlightening knowledge
6. Dravya-Yagya (Donation of resources to noble cause)
7. Tapo-Yagya (Doing penance for global welfare)
8. Yoga-Yagya (Enriching others' knowledge through the teachings of yoga)
9. Swadhyaya-Yagya (Study of Vedas and other scriptures to augment one's knowledge)
10. Sacrificing the apan vayu (outgoing air) into prana vayu (the vital or incoming air)
11. Sacrificing prana vayu into apna vayu
12. Offering the Prana (life-breath) into the fire of Supreme Prana

The aim is to establish oneness with the Infinite

The aim of all the above types of yagyas is to achieve the supreme goal of life. Whatever the kind of yagya, one should keep three aspects in view: (1) Self-refinement – removing the infirmities, (2) Self-upliftment (augmenting the virtues to rise upwards), and (3) establishing oneness with the Supreme Being. Imbibing all three aspects in the lifestyle /routine is

necessary for a true social volunteer. One should be so pure at heart that he always feels oneness with God. Ralph Waldo Trine, an American writer, and philosopher, writes in his book 'In Tune with the Infinite' – 'Yagya is the best method of the Hindus to establish oneness with the Infinite. No other method is prescribed in any other religion parallel to this.' This scholar, who was himself a follower of Christianity, used to do yagya daily and explained its significance to others. When the yagya is done with the sentiments of 'Idam na mam,' our actions do not get attached to us but become that of God and become 'inactions.' The essence of yagya is not merely offering oblations of some materials in the fire but to imbibe its philosophy – 'Whatever be my actions, they are not for satisfying my ego, but are aimed at achieving oneness with the Infinite.'

While discussing the twelve types of yagya, Lord also lets us know the different ways of reaching the Supreme Being. He says – 'Some yogis perform yagya for the blessings of specific deities. Dev-yagya means approaching the powerhouse of the Supreme Being through the transformer of the invoked deities. Sadhakas performing Dev-yagya invoke different forms and powers of the same God and try

 By three methods, we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third, by experience, which is the most bitter. - Confucius 

to satisfy them through yagya. Some sadhakas perform internal yagya, in which they perceive the oneness with God by controlling the Self (1, 2). Some yogis may use the objects of senses, but they don't allow them to perturb their minds; they make the senses themselves a fire of yagya (3, 4, 5). This is a way of sadhana in which the senses are made so calm that there is a soul realization.

A sadhaka who has realized the Self can also perform dravya-yagya, that is, donate his resources to charity. For example, he may construct Dharmashala, Gaushala, a hospital, a school, etc. (6). One should not get confused by the name dravya as offering different articles. According to the Lord, this can also be Tapoyagya, the penance of self-control done for some noble cause. A self-controlled sadhaka manifests the consciousness of the Supreme Being, called Tapoyagya (7). In addition to this, there can be Yoga-yagya. Lord explains the difference between yoga and tapa in the 46th shloka of the sixth chapter of the Gita – ‘Tapasvibhyo’dhiko yogī’ (The Yogi is thought to be superior to Tapasvi (the ascetic) and even superior to men of knowledge (obtained through the study of scriptures); he is also superior to men of action; therefore, be thou a Yogi, O Arjuna!). The second

meaning is – burning the impressions of activities into the fire of yoga.

Superior yogis burn not only their actions but also their bodies in the fire of yoga and achieve Brahmaloka. Shabari, after meeting Lord Rama and gaining higher knowledge, offered herself to the fire of yoga and achieved oneness with God. The offering of Self in the fire of yoga by the wife of Lord Shiva and daughter of Daksha is a well-known Puranic event. More than offering the body is burning the passions and evil impressions in the fire of yoga while alive. The first task of yoga is to make a person introverted, offering the oblations in the fire of self-control. Self-control does not mean suppressing one's desires; rather, controlling the fickleness of the mind with full awareness (8). Further, Lord explains the significance of Swadhyaya – literally meaning the study of Self. Lord calls it also a yagya (9). Finally, He says that Pranayama- and Yoga-dominated actions could also be called yagya (10, 11, 12).

Let us understand the secret of yagya

After knowing all the types of yagyas, let us now understand the prime lesson of Yogeshwar. Lord says – ‘Offer oblations of the objects of senses into the fire of senses, offer senses into the fire of mind and mind into the fire of chitta (psyche). Offer chitta into aham (ego) and the ego into the soul. Thus, impurities start burning in the fire of the pure soul, a sadhaka starts rising upwards (spiritually), and the circumstances start becoming favorable for achieving oneness with God.’ Lord says (in 30th shloka) – ‘Thus knowing the secret of yagya, all the sadhakas burn their sins through yagyas; they are the knowers of the secret of yagyas (yajñakśapitakalmaśāḥ).’ All of us perform yagya, but we consider the external ritual only as everything. In fact, we should understand the secret of yagya. It is the divine action done with every breath, every activity of life, and every thought we think.

Live life to express and not to impress, and never strive to make your presence noticed,
just make your absence felt. - **Anonymous**

Lord has already talked in detail about the origin of this creation through yagya (shlokas 10-15 of chapter 3). Scripture, Shatapatha Brahmana, says – ‘Yajno vai śreṣṭhatama karma,’ that is, yagya is the superior kind of work. Pujya Gurudev re-established the true philosophy of yagya. In medieval times, the ritual of yagya became a tool to fulfill the desires of a few rich, influential people. Pujya Gurudev has made it so simple that everyone can do it according to his/her ability and circumstances. He explained the meanings of devpujan, daan, and sangatikarana in the present parlance and awakened society’s sacrificial tendencies. His life itself was a role model of ‘how to live a sacrificial life?’ Therefore,

all of us should imbibe his teachings in our lives and enjoy true bliss achieved through offering our time, resources, and effort for the welfare of society.

[To be continued]

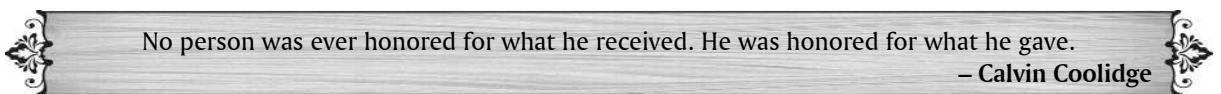
[Note: This is the translation of the Hindi version of ‘Yug Gita’ (Part 2) by Dr. Pranav Pandya, published by Shri Vedmata Gayatri Trust, Shantikunj, Haridwar (2011)]



The original name of Karna was ‘Vasushena’. He was born with golden armor and earrings. During the Mahabharata war, the troops of the Pandavas were most afraid of Karna as he was the most valiant in all the Kaurava’s army and the only one who could challenge Arjuna. One night, he saw a divine figure in his dream, who said - “I am the Sun God, your father. Promise me that if any sage comes and asks you for your armor and earrings, you shall not give them to him. Indra, the king of deities, wants to deceive you.” Karna reverently greeted his father and said — “Forgive me, father, if someone comes to me and begs for something, I cannot say no to him.” Being proud of his generous and munificent son, the Sun God left.

What happened next is known to all. Indra came in the garb of an ascetic and asked Karna for his armor and earrings and took them away. In return, he bestowed him with his ‘Amogh Shakti’ as a benediction. This incident changed the course of the Mahabharata war.

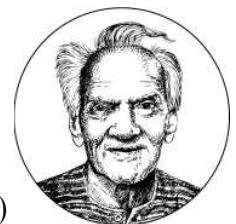
Actually, Karna was a magnificent person. Unfortunately, he became a companion of Duryodhana, the instrument of Evil.



No person was ever honored for what he received. He was honored for what he gave.

– Calvin Coolidge

Chiseled Refinement of Personality - 3



(English version of some excerpts of a discourse continued from the previous issue)

In the previous part of the discourse, Gurudev, Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya explained that the intrinsic tendencies of a being are carried forward life after life. These include the demonic and beastly traits that account for untoward behavior and deeds. He cited several examples to make us aware that many such negative, inhuman tendencies might be hidden in our minds too. According to him, uprooting such evils and infirmities is possible only through the sincere practice of tapa. Let us now learn about this method of purification and empowerment of personality.

Friends,

If you really want to refine your personality, you must identify and uproot the *kusanskāras*¹ assimilated in your mind. The most common and predominant *kusanskāra* in humankind is that of *kāma vāsanā*, which is manifested as sensual desires and erogenous lust. If left unchecked, it perverts and debouches man in a state worse than that of a beast.

When stimulated by this desire, a beast, for example, a male dog would have sex with any female dog without any discrimination of her being his mother, sister, or daughter. The imprints of this beastly tendency and sexual desire are present in a person for many-many lives ever since he might have been born as a dog. It is the fear of the social norms and constraints and the government

rules/laws that control him. As such, the 'dog' (beastly tendency) remains alive in some corner of his mind and keeps looking for a chance to enjoy sensual pleasures without any norms and restraints freely. Be careful! The *kusanskāra* of *kāma vāsanā* might be present in you too.

Unless you are determined and attempt to have self-control and uproot this *kusanskāra*, you will remain a *narapaśu* (a beast in the form of a human) and may anytime slip and fall towards further devolution. You may become a *narapiśaca* (a ghost in human form). A *narapiśaca* is like a demonic tyrant who can harm anyone to any extent to fulfill his desires. He, in fact, enjoys cruelly troubling others.

Other Tendencies of a Narapaśu

You will also need to eliminate the other tendencies of a *narapaśu* that might be present in you. For example, a cat catches a rat, pinches, scratches, plucks its flesh, and eats it. The agony and cries of the victim (rat) don't perturb it. Even if given lots of milk and fruits to fill its appetite, a snake won't stop grabbing and gulping a frog. And a python? No amount of healthy food would prevent it from its natural tendency of pulling, slurping, and gulping its prey. Well,

Life is not finding ourselves. It is about creating yourself. – George Bernard Shaw

they are all animals! But what about the humans who catch and kill the birds and animals to relish their flesh? Do the sufferings and cries of the chickens, hens, goats, etc., make any difference to a butcher or those who cook and eat them? No, not at all. In spite of having so many varieties of natural products and tasty dishes, and supporting items like pickles, etc., available to them, many people crave carnivorous food. This is because there is a cat, a snake, a python, and many other carnivorous animals hidden in these *narapaśus*.

Not only killing or otherwise physically harming any creature, the tendency of exploiting or otherwise troubling a weaker person, a needy, a subordinate, or anyone in your contact for your selfish motives is a similar act of a *narapaśu*.

Robbery is a worse kind of such action. Not only the dacoits but many rich and powerful people also do similar crimes because of their unbounded cravings for more land, properties, wealth, and power. More heinous crimes of violence of this category are committed by the worse kinds of such *narapaśus*, the *narapisacas*. Angulimal was a dreaded dacoit who not only robbed the travelers but also cut their fingers after killing them. Don't let your cravings and selfish tendencies of any kind grow. Sincerely and firmly strive to eliminate these *kusanskāras* in whatever form these might be present in your personality.

Your anger may cause physical or mental harm and torture to the person facing it. It is no less than a violent tendency of a *narapaśu*. Your egotist actions and arrogant behavior indicate that the python, the boa, sitting somewhere in you has raised its hood. Remember, anger, arrogance, ego, and similar traits are *kusanskāras* that make you a *narapaśu*. So be vigilant, control, and uproot such tendencies.

Get Rid of Lethargy:

Laziness is also a sign of a beastly tendency. Animals mostly

prefer sitting or lying down idly unless a natural cause triggers them for some activity. Even a powerful animal like a tiger is often seen sitting idly with legs spread in a posture of lying down. It gets up with a yawn and becomes active and swift only when it feels hungry and needs to hunt and catch its food (prey).

Lethargic people are worse than animals. They always look for someone to do even their mundane work. Worse than the physical idleness is their mental lethargy. They rot their potentials by doing nothing. Animals live without clothing and proper shelter and cannot protect themselves against heavy rains, hot sun, etc. Mentally lazy people also invite poverty, scarcity, and different kinds of adversities. They don't want to do anything but want to enjoy instinctive pleasures. For this, they often choose shortcuts, avoid social norms and adopt wrong means as well. Like the hippies, they (inadvertently) tend to spread lethargic tendencies in society.

Be Vigilant and Discipline Your Conduct:

I had mentioned about *narapiśācas*. A *narapiśāca* enjoys the sufferings of its targets. Many examples of such tyrants are available in human history. Just recall what you might have read about the construction of several so-

 We must become the change we want to see. – Mahatma Gandhi 

called wonders of the world — like the Pyramids of Egypt, the China Wall, etc. Description of the demonic torture of innocents associated with these ‘monuments’ brings tears of blood to our eyes. How can some people be so cruel? It is beyond our imagination.

Some historical documents on the pyramids of Egypt show that when a king died, thousands of his wives, mistresses, and his little children were buried alive with his body (mummy) for the latter’s comfort. No one heard the screams and cries of these victims. Moreover, for their service (inside the pyramid-shaped graves/tombs), all their servants, cooks, etc., were also buried. If there was any space constraint, many of them were killed, and their bones were powdered, mixed with their blood, and packed inside. Thus, the so-called great pyramids are monuments of the agony, blood, and bones of thousands of innocents. They are monuments of the heinous traditions and tyranny of the *narapiśācas*.

Friends, as I mentioned earlier, the tendencies of *narapiśācas* and demons are found in many people. The power of a demon or ghost is clearly manifested in situations of excited furor, sharp animosity, or extreme negative temper. One may

attack and brutally murder a rival or even some innocents (e.g., a terror attack) or commit suicide. The demon, the animal in our being, may also manifest in many other forms.

Don’t take it for granted that you and I are absolutely free of untoward tendencies. We should always be vigilant of our thoughts, desires, moods, behavior, conduct, habits, and actions. In addition, we need to constantly refine ourselves in these manifested domains of personality. You might wonder how to do this. Well, there is one and only one time-tested and foolproof method of refinement of the hidden and the manifested (or action-based) components of life and personality. This method is “*tapa*.”

Do *Tapa* for Self-refinement:

The word meaning of *tapa* is to heat up, to process in the fire. All impurities are burnt or melted out by this method. I have already given you an example of the rigorous purification and transformation of crude iron obtained from the mines. Its processing in a furnace gradually converts it into stronger, specifically useful forms. Its *bhasma* (ash obtained by controlled and slow processing of purified iron in a furnace) serves as an important medicine/tonic under the Ayurvedic method of treatment. Many other crude metals are also purified and converted into more useful and valuable forms, such as the *bhasmas* of copper, silver, gold, etc. Mica in crude form is quite cheap in price. But when it is thoroughly processed at high temperatures in fire, its *bhasma* becomes quite valuable. *Makardhwaj*, a very important medicine for Ayurvedic treatment, is prepared by heating mercury at high temperatures. Herbal decoctions and extracts are also prepared by boiling the herbs in water for a long time. Distillation of a herbal solution by boiling it and condensation of its vapors gives *arka*, which is also a very effective form of Ayurvedic medicine; only a few drops

Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve – Napoleon Hill

of the *ark* of herb/plant medicine may do wonders in complete cure of an ailment that was otherwise intractable.

All these examples illustrate the power of a sort of 'physical *tapa*' through controlled processing in the fire!

(To be continued in the next issue)

Notes:

1. Sanskārs` Deep impressions and assimilations 'inscribed' in the unconscious mind (from earlier lives and the past phase of the present life) are referred to

in the ancient Indian texts as sanskāras. These are the sublime carriers of intrinsic tendencies, habits, nature, talents, and natural potentials of a being in the continuous journey from one life to another. The bad/evil/vicious or otherwise untoward (e.g., beastly instincts) or negative *sanskāras* are called kusanskārs, and the good/positive ones are called susanskārs.



Lord Brahma, the presiding deity of creation, created all the living species. He asked man, the highest of the living beings on Earth: "What is your future ambition"? The man replied: "I am certainly very intelligent, but I want to progress more and more in wisdom to the extent that no one could equal me." Brahmaji gave him two bags and said: "Keep them suspended from your neck. Be always on the lookout for the virtues of others and collect them in the bag in the front. Do not notice your own plus points; deposit them in the backside bag, out of your sight. This way, your wisdom will keep on increasing".

The man was pleased, but he reversed the instructions of Brahmaji. He hung the front bag on the back and the back one in the front. Consequently, he always brags about his own actual and imagined merits and learns nothing from the virtues of others. He did become intelligent but within the narrow confines of his own perception. Others considered him a braggart and a fool. So many of us commit this folly, and instead of augmenting the potency and quality of our own intellect by learning from others, we remain engrossed in self-praise.

 Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still. – Chinese Proverb 



Enhance Your Potential to Face Challenges

Nature often presents inexplicable riddles which are often not only incomprehensible but also mysterious. The answer to these riddles can only be found by extensive experience derived from careful observation of life events. There is nothing in nature that has no answer and cannot be accomplished. The only requirement is that we must have the inquisitiveness to perceive and decipher this mystery. Those who can do it, their inherent potentials get accretion, and distinguished characteristics go on maturing their personality. They discover new perceptions and experience bountiful achievements in their life. All this happens due to accepting ceaseless challenges presented by nature.

Challenging situations sometimes appear in life suddenly, and they are also invited purposely. Those who run away from these challenges become incompatible, cowardly, and overtaken by weaknesses. Such people come under stress even at the cognition of challenges, and their mental and physical faculties cease to work. Modern research has

proved that reason for stress is the absence of proper perception of challenges and faulty evaluation of one's own capabilities to counter those challenges. Sometimes we fail to differentiate between problems arising due to circumstances and those invited by our ignorance. When we fail to recognize the problems and do not have the courage to face them, we tend to escape from those situations. As a result, stressful situations intimidate us, and we get scared.

One more reason for stress is that we remain ignorant of our capabilities and competence. We doubt if we can counter those challenges and dominate them, while the reality is that nature has equipped us with immense potential. But we are not aware of them and hence unable to utilize them. We are like a person who is the owner of the sandalwood forest but is not aware of its price and sells it at the price of ordinary wood. We are the ones who are selling diamonds taken out of a coal mine as if they are mere shining stones. The day we realize our worth, we will not run away from challenges; rather, will get a thrill in fighting with them.

We have innumerable powers. Among them is the strength of our emotions, knowledge, and behavioral pattern. Those who have the courage to face the problems are driven by these inherent strengths. These people evaluate their possibilities and develop new potential from within. Those who can develop such potential can stay stress-free even in the most difficult situations because they have developed means to come out of stress. They have the

Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success. – Dale Carnegie

solutions to life problems and can better handle adverse situations. They always prefer to execute innovative skills to take up more challenging tasks; this makes them enrich their knowledge with new principles, new thoughts, skills, and much more.

Charles Darwin suffered from fever for 20 years but ignoring the sickness, he carried out painstaking investigations on various races of sentient creatures found in the world, and this endeavor made him create a classic volume 'Origin of New Species.' Had the great scholar of Ayurveda, seer Charak, not accepted the challenges, he would have undergone pains of disease like normal men. But in spite of enduring incurable wounds on his body and resulting pain, without taking rest, he roamed from forest to forest and searched for the medicinal value of plants. At last, being carried out by the sensory insight into his physical pains, the habitat of the forests began to disclose the secrets of the medicinal merits of plants on their own, and that knowledge was compiled in the form of 'Charak Samhita' which is still a beacon light in the therapeutic field. He accepted the challenges, developed the competence to succeed, and motivated others as well.

An ordinary person prefers to live life in a predetermined way, he enjoys it, and anything out of his comfort zone brings him under stress. If scientists and other scholarly people also start living a preset life like common people, new inventions and various innovations in the field of music, art, etc., would come to a halt. Nothing new would be visible in that situation. Because something new originates when efforts are made to accomplish innovative tasks in life. In ancient times, there lived a great scholar in Kashmir; his erudition was renowned across the nation when even transport resources were almost negligible. His personal life was full of challenges and was away

from worldly comforts. But he never gave up on hardships and escaped every challenging situation in a well-organized and competent way.

This is to be noted here that the mind has the propensity to live in a pleasing environment full of worldly pleasures, prosperity, and splendor. But this is also true that such a lifestyle makes life very passive, our distinctive characteristics become feeble, and due to the absence of any challenging task in life, we are caught in the misconception as if we lack physical strength. In fact, such misconceptions develop only when we remain ignorant of our potential and lack the competence to perceive new situations from different angles. Such misconceptions raise the mental strain, and we fail to correlate different situations with our possibilities. Such stressful situations occur with a normal person. But contrary to this, to strive vigorously in trying to overcome stress and find new ways of escape is the heroic work of daring fighters having intrepid courage. Courage signifies confronting life's challenges instead of living a comfortable lifestyle.

So, it is advisable to continue to enhance your virtues and skills. This enhancement is possible by various

Each problem that I solved became a rule, which served afterward to solve other problems.

— Rene Descartes

means, including spiritual endeavors also. A fervent prayer from the depth of the heart also renders specific abilities like the ability to stave off challenges. In order to live a stress-free life amid adverse situations,

we should start believing in our potential and learn to intelligently perceive the demand of the situation. Discernment of these two things makes us intelligent enough to decipher the riddles of nature and develop our qualities. This will render a newer perception of our life, which will help us to face every challenge.

The Most Beautiful Rose

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree. Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown, for the world was intent on dragging me down. And if that weren't enough to ruin my day, a young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play. He stood right before me with his head tilted down and said with great excitement, "Look at what I found."

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight, with its petals all worn-not enough rain or too little light. Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play, I faked a small smile and then shifted away. But instead of retreating, he sat by my side and placed the flower to his nose, and declared with overacted surprise, "It sure smells pretty, and it's beautiful, too. That's why I picked it; here, it's for you." The weed before me was dying or dead. Not vibrant of colors, orange, yellow or red. But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave. So I reached for the flower and replied, "Just what I need."

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand, he held it mid-air without reason or plan. It was then that I noticed for the very first time that the weed-toting boy could not see; he was blind. I heard my voice quiver, and tears shone like the sun as I thanked him for picking the very best one. "You're welcome," he smiled and then ran off to play, unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he managed to see a self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree. How did he know of my self-indulged plight? Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight. Through the eyes of a blind child, at last, I could see the problem was not with the world; the problem was me. And for all of those times I myself had been blind, I vowed to see the beauty in life and appreciate every second that's mine. And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose and breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose.

- Anonymous

Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors. – African Proverb

Gayatri is same as Savitri and Savita - 2



Get us now investigate further the oneness of Gayatri, Savitri, and Savita. The scripture says -

*Yo Devah Savitāsmākam Dhiyo Dharmādigocarāḥ|
Prerayet Tasya Yad Bhargah Taṁ Varenyamuṣāsmāhe||*
That is – we worship the bright luster of that Savita Devata who inspires our intellect on the righteous path of Dharma.

*Sarva Lokaprasavanāt Savitā Sa Tu Kīrtyate|
Yatastad Devatā Devī Sāvitrītyucyate Tataḥ||*
- *Amarakosha*

That is – The Sun gives birth to the entire universe, and hence it is called Savita. The Devata of Gayatri is Savita. Hence, Her divine power is called Savitri.

*Manovai Savitā | Prāṇadhiyah | - Shatapatha (3/6/1/13)
Prāṇa Eva Savitā, Vidyutareva Savitā | - Shatapatha (7/7/9)
Yo Vai Sa Prāṇa Eśā Sā Gāyatrī | - Shatapatha (1/3/5/15)*
That is - Only that which is Prana may surely be considered as Gayatri.

Gayatri has been called Prana, and Prana is Sun. Shruti says - ‘*Prāṇa Prajānām Udayatyeṣa Sūryai*’, i.e., the rising Sun manifests itself in the living beings as Prana energy.

The Sun is called the divine lustrous brilliance. The Brahmatej and Savita are one and the same. Gayatri is also called *Tejaswini* (the one that illuminates and enlightens the consciousness). Sun is the symbolic representation of the radiance/brilliance of Savita. That is, the brilliance of Savita and the radiance of Gayatri should be considered as one. It is said that –

Gayatri grants longevity, energy, power, fame, wealth, and divine brilliance (Brahma-tej).

– *Atharva Veda (19-1-71)*

*Tejasā Vai Gāyatrī Prathamāṁ Trirātra
Dādhāra
Padairdwittīyamakṣaraistrīyam |*
- *Ta. 10/5/3*
Tejo Vai Gāyatrī | - *Go. U. 5/3*
Jyotirvai Gāyatrī Chandasām |
- *Ta. 13/7/2*
Jyotirvai Gāyatrī | - *Ko. 17/6*
Davidyutatī Vai Gāyatrī |
- *Ta. 12/1/2*
Gāyatryev Bhargah | - *Go.Pu.5/15*
Gāyatrī Vai Rathantarasya Yonih |
- *Ta. Vra.15/105*
Tejo Vai Gāyatrī |
- *Kapi.Sam .30/2*

There should be no confusion or delusion about the lustrous brilliance of Savitā, and it should not be considered as that physical light being emitted from fire; that is why it is imperative to explain that “*Tejas (Lustrous Brilliant Energy)*” is purely the form of the *Brahmatatva (Element of the Absolute Supreme Being)*. The fallacy of understanding the luster of Savita different from the luster of Brahmateja should not be done by any student understanding the science of spirituality.

It is said that-

Savitā Sarvabhūtānām Sarvabhāvān

*Prasūyate |
Savanāt Pāvanāccaiva Savitānena
Cocye ||*

“The divine Almighty is called Savita as it is the creator and protector of the gross matter.”

*Ādityo Brahmetyādeśastasyopavyākhyānam |
Chāndogyopaniśad – 3 Pra. 19/1*

“It is the directive of the Maharsis (Great refined elevated Beings - The Sages) that The Sun is Brahma, the power of the Supreme Almighty should be considered as contained in the Sun.

*Yadvai Tad Brahmetīdāmī Vāva
Tadyo'yaṁ Bahirdhā Puruśādākāśo
Yo Vai Sa Bahirdhā Puruśādākāśah |*

- *Chāndogyopaniśad – 3 Pra. 12/7*
“That (the radiance) is the Brahma. It is that Gayatri embraced Savita, the lustrous brilliance which shines and emanates from around the Purusha (Para-Brahma: the Absolute Supreme Being).”

*Yo Asau āditya Puruṣah So Asau Aham |
- Yaju. 40/17*

“The Purusha that resides in the Sun, that is Me.”

Brahma Sūrya Samāṇ Jyotiḥ | - Yaju. 23/48
“Brahma is alike the brilliance of the Sun.”

*Yunjate Mana Uta Yunjate Dhiyo
Viprā Viprasya Brhato Vipaścitaḥ |
Vi hotrā Dedhe Vayunāvideka
Inmātī Devasya Savituh Parīstutih ||*

- *Śvetāśvataropaniśad 2/4*

“The learned perform Yagya and other auspicious deeds by meditating their mind and intellect on the one and only omniscient Savita Devata. We pray to that omnipresent Almighty Lord.”

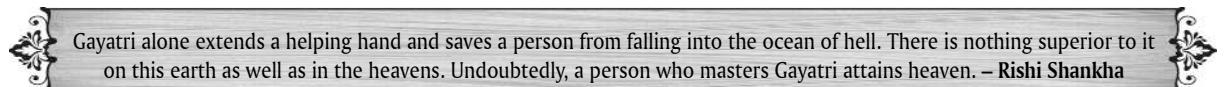
*Tadityavān Manogamyān Dhyeyān Yat Sūrya Mandale |
“The Supreme Almighty can be meditated upon by mental and oral recitation contemplating on the Sun.”*

These examples from the Gayatri Upanishad have been cited for making one understand that Gayatri and Savitri are both connected as the body and the spirit. Both are considered to be twins born of the same being.

By worshipping the lustrous brilliance of Gayatri, the Sadhaka is bestowed upon with righteous brilliant intellect. In fact, the one who is brilliant is powerful. A fat huge human being who lacks brilliance and is weak-hearted cannot be considered powerful.

*Tejoyasya Virājate Sa Balawān –
Sthūlesu Kah Pratyayah | - Nīti*

“The one who is brilliant is the one who is powerful. Merely possessing a strong physical body is not enough.”
As a matter of fact, worshipping Gayatri is worshipping the brilliance, the Prana - the power of the Creator. The study of higher forms of this worship for evolving further is called “*Brahmavarchas*.” The person engaging himself on this path is blessed with all-around success.

 Gayatri alone extends a helping hand and saves a person from falling into the ocean of hell. There is nothing superior to it on this earth as well as in the heavens. Undoubtedly, a person who masters Gayatri attains heaven. – Rishi Shankha

On the auspicious occasion of Gayatri Jayanti ☺

The Scientific Aspect of Gayatri Mantra



The vibrations of *Vedic Mantras* carry immense energy that is amplified by the *prāṇa* (vital spiritual energy) and bio-electricity of the body and the sublime currents of spiritually refined thoughts and sentiments of the *sādhaka*(s). The practice of *japa-sādhanā* of *Gāyatrī Mantra* is given supreme importance in this context, as the majestic power of this eternal *mantra* is expanding perpetually, as the *sādhanā* of this *mantra* has been constantly practiced by millions of spiritual experts since the Vedic Age. This *mantra* is special in its unique sonic pattern, the sublime flow of Śabda, and astonishing physical, psychological, and spiritual impacts.

From a scientific point of view, one may explain it as follows. As the continuous movement of the motor in a dynamo generates electricity, the cyclic repetition of the *japa* of a *mantra* at a constant pace also gives rise to the circular motion of the sonic manifestation of Śabda (eternal element of cosmic sound – evolutionary vibration) hence to a centrifugal sonic force and otherwise latent power of sound. One who knows the *Mantra Vidyā* indeed knows the secrets of the optimal generation and use of this cycle of energy, which is a unique source of physical, mental, and spiritual potential.

The coexistence of the forces of attraction and the circular motions of the planets must be well-known to the students of Physics. Because of the fast movements in the charged fields of attraction, each planet produces a roaring sound of intensity proportional to its huge size. The superimposition of these planetary roars gives rise to the *cosmic sound* – a manifestation of Śabda, which the scientists consider the

major source of power for every kind of ‘natural motion’ existing in the entire universe.

The power of Śabda manifests itself in multiple ways in the *sādhanā* of the great *Gāyatrī Mantra*. This *mantra* is a compilation of twenty-four special syllables (in Sanskrit), which are so configured that the pronunciation of each gives rise to unique types of vibrations at one or more of the twenty-four important bio-electrical and extrasensory energy nuclei in the *sādhaka*'s body. The collective compounded sonic effects of all of these are so unique and immense that these activate the subtle body too.

The linguistic meaning of this *mantra* is a universal prayer for the divine illumination of the intellect of all to lead the world toward the righteous path. The *sādhaka*'s mental concentration and pure sentiments are naturally focused around this meaning (and the associated feelings and inspirations) when he performs the *japa* of this *mantra* through emotional depths. This has two prominent effects – *viz.*, the *sādhaka*'s mind achieves a

Just as honey is the essence of flower, and ghrīt of milk, in the same way,
Gayatri is the essence of all the Vedas. - **Maharshi Vyasa**

higher state of meditation, and he also attains spiritual refinement of the inner domains of the mind.

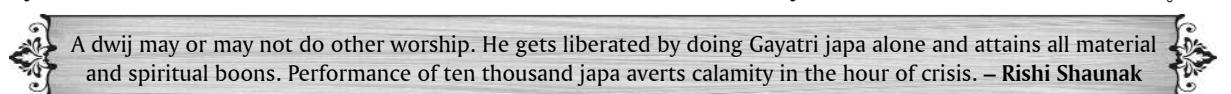
The sonic, as well as the emotional energy together make a *mantra* alive. Therefore, for the success of the *sādhanā* of any *mantra*, it is the purity of character and deeds, the strength and stability of mind, and the śraddhā – that are the most crucial virtues of the *sādhaka* rather than his worldly success, talents, intellectual eminence or scholastic expertise, etc.

The *thought waves* continuously generated by the mind are analogous to electromagnetic waves. If we throw a stone in a pond, it will produce certain currents of water, which will flow transversely up to the banks of the pond. The universe also is a kind of gigantic pond without boundaries and hence an infinite open ‘spherical set’ in a hyper-geometric sense. The waves produced by our thoughts and emotions are expanded in the limitless domain of this etheric ocean. And, because of the endless (hence circular) ‘periphery’ of the latter, these waves return to their point of origin (i.e., our mind, in this case) upon completing a cycle.

The simple principle behind our speech or the pronunciation of a word by mouth is that – the vibrations of

air with specific (as per the movement of the associated components of the mouth) portions of the nervous system produce specific vibrations in the vocal cord. This physiological process is completely regulated by the mind. It is the unconscious mind that guides the controlling machinery of the brain and hence governs the movements of the components that ‘directly’ participate in the process of speaking or singing etc. The instantaneous difference in our voice and pattern of pronunciation of the same word under different moods (mental states) clearly demonstrates this remarkable harmony between the speech system and the mind.

If we casually pat somebody’s back, there would be no reaction in general. However, if we do so intentionally or, say, in an angry mood, it would naturally hurt that person and may invite repelling action from his side. This simple example illustrates the difference between the effects of a mere physical activity and that of an action associated with unusual mental force. This difference in effects exists because the former involves only the static electricity of the body and routine auto-regulation of the brain. In contrast, the latter bears the special ‘electrified charge’ of the vital spiritual power of the mind too. The words recited by a person with full mental concentration are indeed energized by the bio-electrical energy of the physical body as well as the electromagnetic and subliminal *prāṇic* force of his mind. Because of their immense sublimated energy, the vibrations generated by focused (meditative) mental recitations of the Vedic *mantras* practiced by the *ṛiṣis* and the currents of the thought waves of these spiritually refined angelic personalities exist in the supernormal cosmic energy fields since yore. Rich belts of minerals are formed by the attraction between the particles of the same (compatible) category. By similar effects, the above-mentioned fields of attraction induced by the *mantra-sādhanās* of the *ṛiṣis*

A dwij may or may not do other worship. He gets liberated by doing Gayatri japa alone and attains all material and spiritual boons. Performance of ten thousand japa averts calamity in the hour of crisis. – Rishi Shaunak

would continue to be stronger if the matching vibrations of *mantras* are consistently generated with deep śraddhā by people endowed with the purity of character and inner strength of mind. In their circular journey (cycles), the *sādhaka*'s thought waves and the sound waves generated by

his *mantra-japa* are also empowered by these cosmic fields. Thus, while returning to their origin, these waves help enhance the spirituality and the overall physical and mental energies of the *sādhaka*.

The Homecoming of Yogis

There is a story of four yogis. The first was a Bhakti Yogi, one who felt that devotion and love for God in his physical form was the right way to please him. The Bhakta's emotions ruled his heart and soul. The second was a Gyana Yogi. He let his head rule over everything else. He viewed everything with intelligence and reasoning. He was not the emotional kind. The third was a Karma Yogi. He was a workaholic. He felt that without work, there was no life. He practiced that 'Work is worship' and it was the only way to seek the favor of the Almighty God. The fourth was a Kriya Yogi. He felt that work, form, and emotions all were illusions. Everything around us is just cosmic energy. Unless every action, thought, word, or deed was directed to the transformation of energy and channeling the same, nothing would be right.

Since all these four yogis were so different in nature, they could never pull along together; they never agreed to do anything jointly. But surprisingly, one night, they were strolling together in a forest, and it started to rain. They ran for shelter to an ancient Temple.

There was an old Shiva Linga in the center. Four pillars around it held up an old creaky roof. But it was enough to shelter them from the rain. Soon, the rain became more and more violent and started coming down in sheets. The storm was full of fury, and the wind whistled through the forest as the trees swayed dangerously all around. The four yogis huddled closer and closer for fear of being blown away by the mighty tempest. Eventually, all of them were hugging and clinging onto the Shiva Linga in order to anchor themselves to the ground.

Suddenly they felt something happening to them all. There was a Divine presence emanating from the Shiva Linga and enveloping them all in its overpowering embrace. It was like a homecoming. Each one thought the same thing. "All these years, I have performed yogic penance but never felt your presence, Lord, as I feel you now! Why today of all days? Why in the middle of this forest, on this stormy night!" And God said compassionately, "Today, all four of you have united. Till you did that, how could I have come?"

Gayatri completely purifies the soul. By the glorious power of Gayatri, deep-rooted defects and vices are cleansed out. Nothing else remains to be attained in this world by one who fully understands the substance of Gayatri. - Attri Muni



Dr. Chinmay Pandya, Pro Vice-Chancellor of DSVV, was honored with the 'Bharat Gaurav' Award for Mission's efforts for the global expansion of Indian Culture and Spirituality at a ceremony in the British Parliament.





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Dr. Chinmay Pandya, Pro Vice-Chancellor of DSVV, is presenting a sapling to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on the formal inauguration of the project of building 'Ekatma Dham' – a Gurukul, museum and research center in memory of Adi Shankaracharya at Onkareshwar Teerth (M. P.)

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